

Reagan's Next Move, by Morton Kondracke

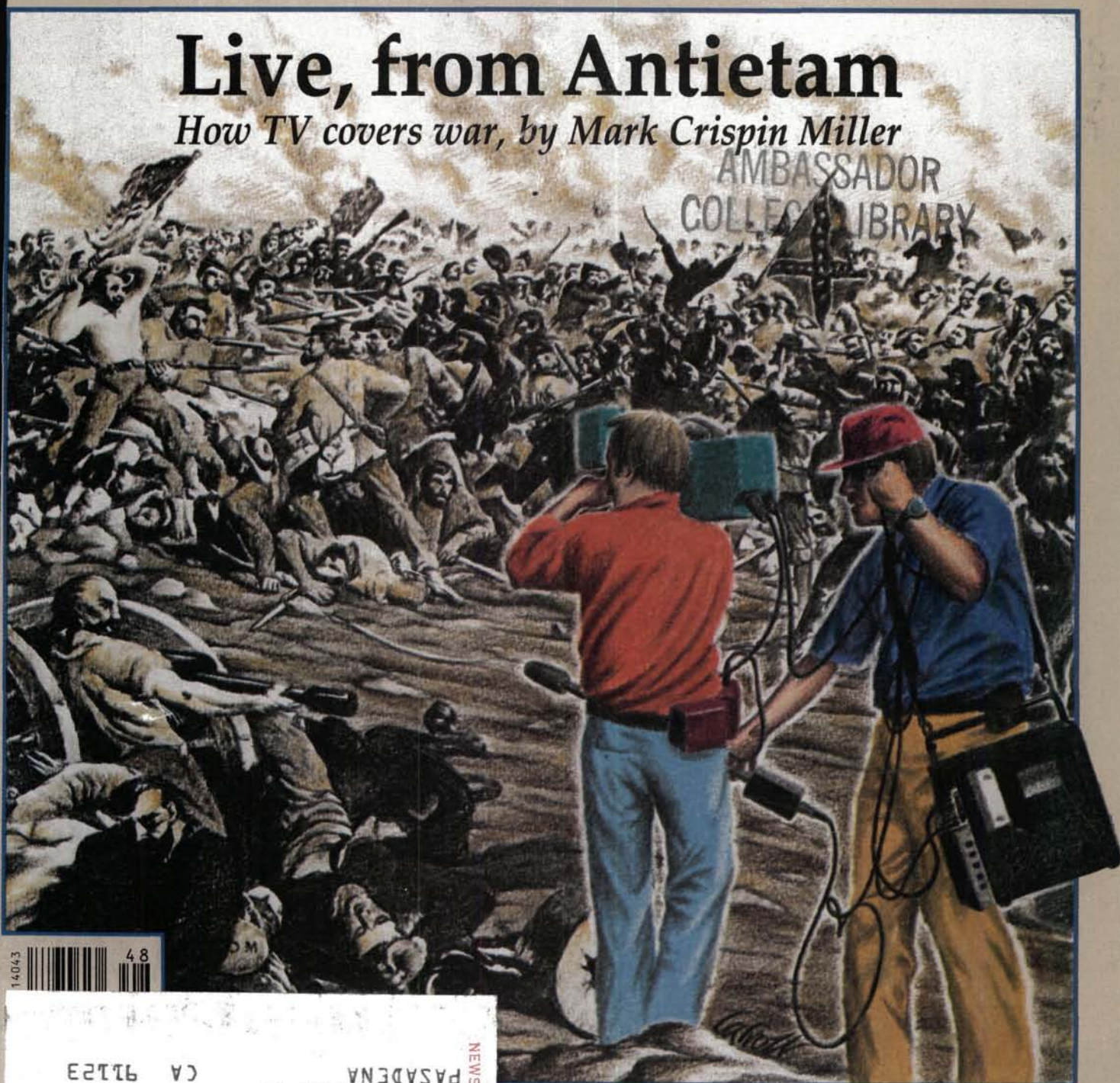
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THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOV 29 1982

Live, from Antietam

How TV covers war, by Mark Crispin Miller



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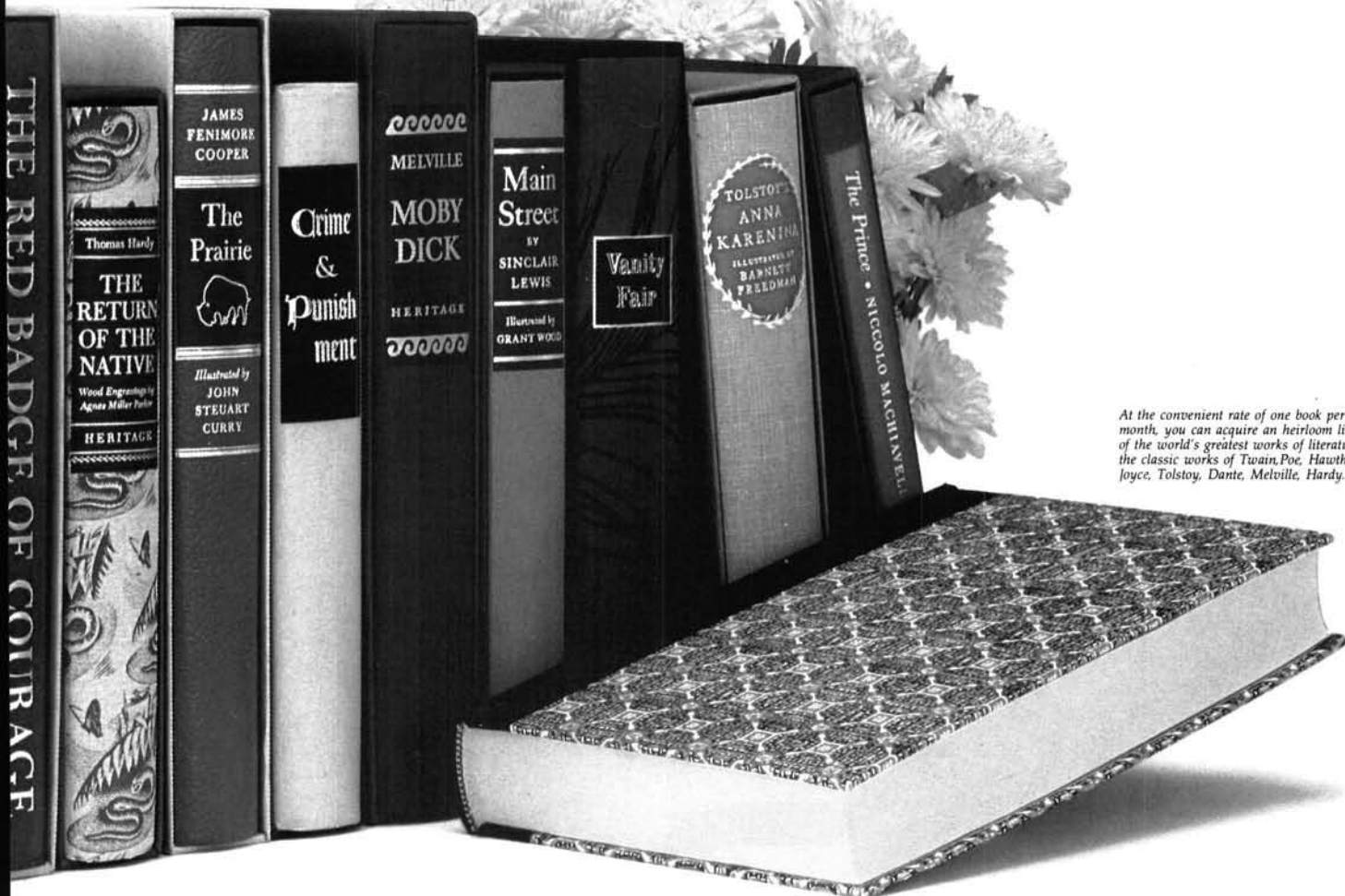
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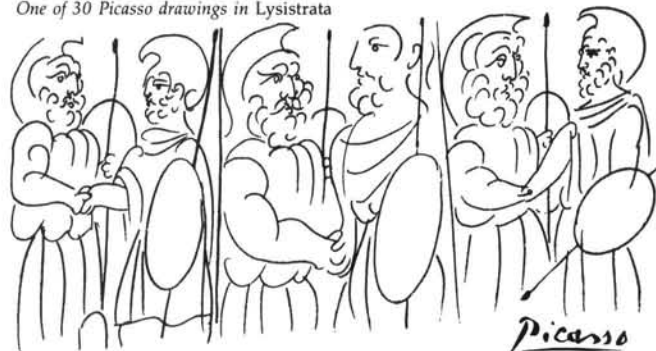
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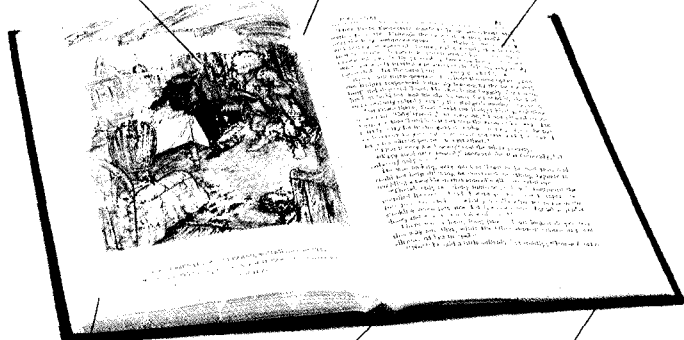
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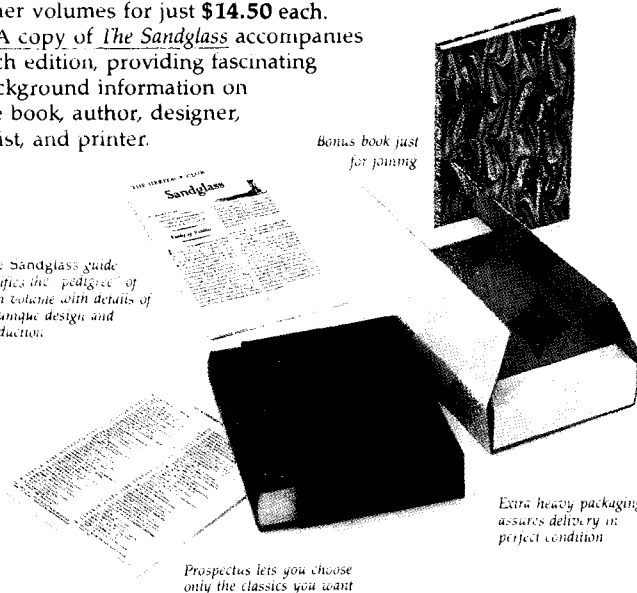
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CORRESPONDENCE

SIGNS OF FERMENT

To the editors:

Morton Kondracke suggests that we ought to be heartened by all the signs of ferment reflected in "The Democrats' New Agenda" (TNR, October 18). I think that's only half of the story.

What's good about this emerging platform is that it eschews the simpleminded and unhistorical notion of Reaganomics that all it takes or ever took to get our economy growing again is laissez-faire; and it exemplifies the traditional Democratic philosophy of using government as an agency of social compassion. What's wrong with it is that it shows virtually no recognition of why Democratic policies brought us chronic inflation in the past, and what we must do to avoid a replay of the script that ended with the election of 1980 and the depression of 1982.

A look at the major components of the Kennedy-Mondale program, as Mr. Kondracke outlines it, irresistibly raises the question, how do they expect to do all these things simultaneously? How do we resurrect losers, pick winners, rebuild our infrastructure, invest in human and technological capital, and also have interest rates low enough to encourage a large expansion of undirected private investment? What demands do we have to *reduce* to make room for these?

There are two ways of looking at our chronic stagflationary dilemma of the last fifteen years. The first is in terms of traditional demand-pull. Even with all the idle capacity in the economy today, the Kennedy-Mondale proposals pose a clear danger of a renewal of demand-pull inflation within a very few years.

The second source of the problem—cost-push—gets very little attention from the leading Democratic candidates. We have obviously not been experiencing excessive aggregate demand during the last year or two. Yet the CPI still went up at a 5.1 percent rate in the first eight months of this year, wages at about 6 percent, in the face of 9 to 10 percent unemployment. The problem is that wages and prices have proved excessively quick to adjust upward when total spending is recovering (or oil prices are trebling), and excessively resistant to curtailments in total spending.

It is understandable that the leading Democratic candidates talk only vaguely about "incomes policies" as a means of

resolving this dilemma. But when these vague references are accompanied by tough talk to the United Steelworkers about protecting them from "unfair competition" of imports, and advocacy of protectionism for the automobile industry, these concessions to the need for wage and price restraint sound hollow, in view of the way wages and prices in those industries behaved in the 1970s.

While applauding a Democratic alternative to Reaganomics that promises to deal with economic stagnation, I cannot believe in its intelligence or sincerity unless it is accompanied by an effective program for dealing with our inflationary bias. And I won't believe we have that until I see some Presidential aspirant talk emphatically about the need to curtail the flow of Social Security benefits to people who neither have earned them nor really need them (preferably by subjecting the noncontributed portion to income tax); some limitation on the tax deductibility of mortgage interest; an incomes policy that promises genuine wage restraint; a \$10-a-barrel tariff on imported oil; a recognition that we cannot hope to resurrect steel and automobile industries to their former size, and that a "program" of subsidizing winners, losers, and everybody else is not automatically made feasible by passing laws to hold interest rates to 3 to 5 percent.

I see suggestions along all these lines in public statements of Gary Hart, Paul Tsongas, Bill Bradley, Dick Gephardt, Tim Wirth, Tom Downey, and Matt McHugh. But I don't see them being promised the ardent support of the AFL-CIO. I fear that the traditional constituencies of the Democratic Party have not yet learned the lesson of the 1970s: that Democratic inflations lead inevitably to Republican depressions.

ALFRED E. KAHN
New York, New York

TEACHERS' BLUES

To the editors:

Reading "How to Save the Public Schools" (TNR, November 1), one wonders if Phil Keisling is aware of at least one other important factor affecting public schools: administrators.

The State of New York is reputed to have more administrators in its educational system than the country of West Germany. The Chicago public school

system, with 500,000 students, has over 3,000 administrators. The Catholic schools in the Chicago area have 250,000 students and fewer than 100 administrators. Mr. Keisling gives no hint of the rôle—a very important one—the administrators play, or do not play.

In some instances administrators are used as part of the teacher-pupil ratio, not to mention the many other non-teaching positions that are usually part of the ratio. Public school administrators in many areas are paid extra to attend conferences, seminars, and other in-service programs designed and held for teachers. This practice accounts for a sizable amount of tax money used for education.

As a teacher I recognize that teachers have changed over the years and certainly in some ways not for the better. But the ubiquitous and almost invisible administrator has changed and proliferated, often beyond reasonable proportions. It would be interesting and revealing to see a thorough, objective evaluation of our public schools, perhaps one that could begin at the central office and end in the classroom.

HOWARD PARKER
Dover, Delaware

To the editors:

As a teacher in the public schools, I find Mr. Keisling's article utterly lacking in compassion for or even awareness of what public school teachers in today's schools face. Even if one has a sound knowledge of one's subject matter and dedication enough to do a good job, the problems of overcrowded classrooms, enormous amount of paper-processing, lack of supplies, low pay and lower prestige, are demoralizing and severely reduce the teacher's effectiveness.

To reproach yet again the teacher, who often inherits the results of inadequate parenting and is not helped by a society that appears to care more about building bombs than educating its young, for the decline in quality education, is irresponsible and will not help those Mr. Keisling claims to be concerned about: the children. The problems involved in educating today's young are too complex to be blamed on that familiar punching bag, the classroom teacher. In a society that places a pathetically low priority on public education, what is shocking is not that many teachers are incompetent, but that competent and dedicated teachers remain in the profession.

GEOFF GEIGER
Los Angeles, California

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TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

THE FIRST STEP

Edmund S. Muskie, the calm-voiced Polish Yankee from Maine, recalls that Ronald Reagan isn't the first President irked by a nuclear freeze movement. In 1956 candidate Adlai Stevenson said, "I believe we should give prompt and earnest consideration to stopping further tests of the hydrogen bomb." This outraged Vice President Richard Nixon, who called it "catastrophic nonsense" and accused Stevenson of walking into a "Communist mousetrap."

Just the other day the same freeze endorsement and reaction came up again. This time Ronald Reagan dismissed the freeze in words reminiscent of Nixon's: it is, he said, "inspired by not the sincere honest people who want peace, but by some who want the weakening of America, and so are manipulating many honest and sincere people."

Muskie, now a practicing lawyer and elder statesman, has been out making speeches of his own in the West. The freeze idea, he told the University of Montana two weeks ago, recently produced "the largest political rally in American history," and, on Election Day, "the largest referendum on a single issue in the history of the Republic . . . when majorities in eight states approved nuclear freeze referenda." Sixty percent of the 18 million U.S. voters who cast ballots on the freeze issue supported it.

That doesn't mean that the freeze is necessarily the right formula. It does mean that the people of the world yearn

for some sign that the two superpowers, with their capacity to destroy life on earth, are somehow coming together. They used to be. Now they seem to be moving apart.

Ronald Reagan is beginning the second, and probably most important, phase of his incumbency. When the President utters one of his famous gaffes, the press, the radio, and TV don't play it up as they did. Political scientist James David Barber puts it bluntly: "Ronald Reagan is the first modern President whose contempt for the facts is treated as a charming idiosyncrasy." Well, well, it is not what he says but what he is trying to say that counts.

In his first two years, ending with an abrupt loss of twenty-six seats in the House, President Reagan has divested himself of some of his encumbering baggage. The Kemp-Roth scenario is behind him; the far-right Neanderthals who tried to grab the party failed; it now seems likely that he can find a formula to extricate himself from his silly row with our NATO allies, and let them supply parts for the Russian natural gas pipeline. The prospect is that the normal cycle of White House-Congressional bickering will soon begin, with occasional measures emerging from the legislative machine and the President holding his veto in reserve. Under these conditions a President often turns to foreign affairs. The Constitution gives him far more freedom of action here. Congress squabbles and the Chief Executive turns to world problems, as President Carter did at Camp David.

TRB has a hunch that the greatest problem Ronald Reagan faces is the proposed deployment of medium-range missiles in Europe about this time a year from now. It may decide Reagan's place in history. Deployment has been agreed upon. Russia has its missiles aimed at Western Europe. If the United States and the Soviets can't negotiate an understanding at the Geneva conference table or elsewhere, the weapons will be installed. But antinuclear feeling is rising. It is illustrated again in the U.S. midterm election. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger is sounding alarms in every speech. We are planning to spend some \$247 billion for defense in the next fiscal year. Over in Russia, Brezhnev will be 76 next month, and is in poor health. Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko declares, "The current American Administration is very successfully blowing up bridges, one after another, that were built over

decades." The next year could decide.

Is there any touch of guidance or sanity in what former Secretary of State Muskie has been saying around the country? He is rangy, stands six-foot-four, and in spires confidence. When he addresses audiences, he doesn't flash or coruscate; he communes with you, thinks it out as he talks and unhurriedly takes a long drink of water. Speaking in Montana, he weighed the nuclear freeze idea. Was it just a slogan? "From my experience as Secretary of State," he notes, "the Soviet military planners don't know the full range and extent of U.S. monitoring capabilities." How much can they see? "One U.S. Trident submarine alone carries enough nuclear warheads to destroy 192 Soviet cities." Soviet subs have equivalent power: this reciprocity, he says, satisfies the requirement of Mutual Assured Destruction.

He denies Weinberger's scare talk that Russia is ahead of the U.S. Didn't Army chief General David Jones give "the clearest testimony on this point in 1980? 'I would not swap our present military capability with that of the Soviet Union, nor would I want to trade the broader problems each country faces.' " After a while he gives his verdict: "I support the idea of a freeze." He adds calmly, "The current group in charge of the government gives more evidence of wanting to take apart the pieces of an arms control regime that several Administrations before them labored to put in place," and he concludes without visible emotion: "The easy course is to demagogue the other side of the issue."

Muskie repeated his calm views the next day at Illinois Wesleyan University. The quiet voice is a strange contrast to the shrill cries of fear over the alleged Soviet ascendancy. Compare it with statements expected from the White House. "In sum," he says, "our current leaders are giving up the opportunity to freeze the development of new Soviet nuclear warheads. . . . They are failing to capitalize on the substantial concessions made by the Soviets to date in the negotiations."

There is an arresting touch in Muskie's nonflamboyant conclusion. Back in the 1950s, he recalls, there was a proposal for a comprehensive test ban. Think how different the present world would be if we had adopted it! And consider two decades hence if we fail again. . . . A journey of a thousand miles, he says quietly, begins with the first step. But today, "We in this country are taking a step backward."



THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOVEMBER 29, 1982

THE MAN WHO WOULDN'T BE KING

Two things are now clear in the Middle East. The first is that King Hussein is the only person in the world who can rescue the peace process. The second is that this is true because of the war in Lebanon. With all that war's suffering, the good that has come out of it—the chance for peace and the enormous enhancement of American influence in the area—is now so obvious as to be undeniable even by those who ardently proclaimed the opposite three months ago. At that time, observers from Carl Rowan to Evans and Novak were repeating, mantra-style, that the war would destroy all chances for peace. We wrote during the first days of the war ("Lebanon Can Now Be Lebanon," *TNR*, June 23) that the opposite was true—that the destruction of the PLO as a military force and its elimination as an independent political force would allow those on the Arab side who have no designs on Haifa or Tel Aviv to negotiate free from intimidation. Another shibboleth that events have demolished is the notion that the Israeli thrust into Lebanon damaged American interests in the Middle East. Again, precisely the opposite has resulted. Lebanon, formerly a Syrian and PLO protectorate, has now aligned itself with the United States and has asked the U.S. to help rebuild its army and government. Moscow has been completely shut out of Middle East diplomacy and does not even pretend to have a role to play. Representatives of all the Arab states, even the most radical, such as Syria and Algeria, make their pilgrimages to Washington in search of peace because the United States is now the dominant power in the area and the arbiter of its future.

The Administration has moved quickly to seize the diplomatic opportunities of the post-Lebanon reality. As a result, the Middle East is once again humming with diplomatic activity. American officials are shuttling between Jerusalem, Beirut, and Damascus to talk about the future of Lebanon. Arab League delegations and Israeli high officials come to Washington to set out conditions

for an overall settlement. Even Egypt has indicated a willingness to resume negotiations, if only over the tiny strip of land at Taba, the one remaining territorial dispute between Israel and Egypt. Israel is offering to negotiate that and other bilateral issues. No doubt both will ask the Americans to mediate.

But the real news from the Middle East is not the murmur of hawks and doves. It is the silence of the dog that refuses to bark. The real news is that no news is coming out of Amman.

Everyone in the Middle East is waiting for King Hussein. Everyone, and particularly President Reagan, recognizes that if Hussein refuses to enter negotiations, the peace process is dead. West Bank Palestinians will not have the courage to enter negotiations without Hussein; the Egyptian-Israeli autonomy negotiations will flounder, because, unlike Jordan, Egypt has no authority over and few ties with the West Bank; the Begin government, which recently announced the beginning of five new settlements on the West Bank, will continue its *de facto* absorption of the territory; and the Israeli public will have no reason to oppose Menachem Begin's annexationist policies because of the continuing absence of an Arab interlocutor with whom the Israelis feel they can bargain over the West Bank.

The United States has long tried to bring King Hussein into the peace process. Jimmy Carter thought—with good reason—that he had succeeded with the Camp David accords: he wrote into them not only Jordanian participation in the five-year autonomy plan, but also a Jordanian veto at the end of the five years. Yet Hussein rejected Camp David. He cited the same litany of constraints, inhibitions, and fears that he has invoked to justify twenty-five years of inaction: he is too weak to move unilaterally; he is not authorized to represent the Palestinians (though his country has a Palestinian majority); the 1974 Rabat conference placed the West Bank in PLO hands; he is dependent on the largesse of Saudi

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Arabia, which opposes Camp David; Jordan lacks the political, economic, and cultural strength that allowed Egypt to risk ostracism for approaching Israel.

After the Lebanon war, the Administration recognized that most of Hussein's excuses were no longer even superficially plausible. The PLO had been destroyed militarily and gravely weakened politically. Egypt has been slowly rehabilitated in the Arab world, even though it has stood by its peace treaty with Israel. Even so, in calling for Jordan to join the negotiations, the Administration offered yet another carrot. The Reagan plan was addressed to Hussein. It promised him not only a veto over the final status of the West Bank, but a U.S. pledge, *in advance of negotiations*, regarding the American view of the desired outcome: a restoration of the West Bank to Jordan, albeit with a certain amount of local autonomy for the Palestinians. The U.S. reasoned that this time it was bound to work: Hussein had run out of excuses.

He hadn't. Hussein protested that he had to wait for the Fez conference. He couldn't act without a mandate from the whole Arab League. Fez gave him no such mandate. Instead, it sent a delegation to Washington.

WHEN KING HASSAN of Morocco, the delegation's head, arrived in Washington, he declared, "we have entered a new phase in the Arab-Israeli conflict, not the conflict of war but of law and rights." This remark aroused great interest in the United States, for this has not always been the Arab position. For twenty years after the armistice that ended the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948-1949, the Arabs refused Israel's request to turn these armistice agreements into peace treaties. The unanimous Arab policy was to try to isolate Israel politically and destroy it militarily. (For these twenty years, the Arabs did not have the excuse of trying to recover the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza, for these lands were under Arab control.) This policy reached its culmination in 1967 with Gamel Abdel Nasser's war on Israel. Mr. Nasser lost, but his defeat did not end the policy of "no negotiation, no recognition, no peace"—the famous three noes that came out of the Arab League Khartoum conference in 1967. Finally, after the enormous destructiveness of the 1973 war, Anwar Sadat realized that the time had come to replace the conflict of war with law and rights. His decision to make peace was rewarded with Israel's return of the Sinai. And so in October 1982, the head of an Arab League delegation talks, however obliquely, of giving up war. To be sure, King Hassan's statement contained the most niggardly acknowledgment of Israel's existence that is possible. He spoke of "coexistence," not of peace, and then only after Israel accedes to all the Arab demands (the return of every inch of territory lost in 1967, a Palestinian state under Yasir Arafat, a redivided Jerusalem, etc.) When asked if then he would be prepared to recognize Israel, Hassan implied, as most diplomatic Arab moderates always do, that Israel's existence and

borders would then be a fact, when what was being asked of him was the recognition not of an empirical reality but of the legitimacy of that reality. American secretaries of state have a tendency to embellish these hints of moderation, and to make of them more than what they are. George Shultz spoke of Hassan as prepared to recognize Israel's legitimacy when in fact this is merely what Mr. Shultz would like Hassan, and other Arabs, to say.

HAVING BEEN rebuffed by his fellow Arabs at the Fez conference, Hussein then sought a mandate from Mr. Arafat during his visit to Jordan. Mr. Arafat did not have the courage to tell Hussein to go to Jerusalem to negotiate with Israel. And Hussein did not have the courage to tell Mr. Arafat to go to hell, or to Damascus, which for Mr. Arafat amounts to the same thing. The king did reportedly tell Mr. Arafat to recognize Israel. The Pope had done the same just a few weeks earlier; it is becoming a habit of statesmen who don't recognize Israel to tell Mr. Arafat to do so. But the idea that somehow if Mr. Arafat would just utter the magic words he would become a fit partner for negotiations is a sterile one. No Israeli government will negotiate with the PLO, whatever ritual incantations about recognition Mr. Arafat can be induced by the West to recite. The Reagan plan recognized this fact. Its virtue is that it focused attention precisely where it belongs: on Jordan. It understands that some permutation of the Jordanian option is the only way out of the current impasse in the Middle East. Many Israelis recognize that too, and so does Hussein. That is why he is so frightened. He knows he must act.

Instead, Hussein asks Arafat's permission to join the peace process, and Mr. Arafat refuses. Instead, as a front-page story in *The New York Times* inferred from Hussein's recent statements to officials and visitors, he "feels that Arab governments, Palestinians, Americans, and Israelis must all make bold new moves before there can be a settlement in the Middle East." Isn't someone missing from that list?

"It is unlikely, for example," reports the *Times*, "that the King would meet with Mr. Begin as long as Israel refuses to freeze construction of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza." This kind of fuzzy double negative is typical of statements about Hussein's intentions. It creates, of course, no incentive for Israelis to freeze settlements, since even if they were to do so, Hussein could simply move down the list to his other excuses: who will protect him from Syrian threats? Who will guarantee him continuing financial support from Saudi Arabia? How can he be sure that dissident PLO factions will not try to destabilize his regime?

If Hussein wants an end to settlements, he can get it. All he has to do is declare that if Israel freezes settlements he will enter negotiations. He is unlikely to say that, because it might succeed. Such a statement would create enormous international, and, more important,

domestic pressure in Israel for a freeze. This should also be the American position. It is counterproductive to call for a settlement freeze as long as settlement activity is the only pressure on Hussein pushing him toward negotiations. He knows that if he waits too long (it is now only a matter of a few years), there will be nothing to negotiate on the West Bank. He will have lost it forever. What the U.S. should be insisting to both Israel and Jordan is that a settlement freeze be a condition for the opening of negotiations. There are many in Israel, including the Labor Party and many in the government, who would jump at that suggestion. But not Hussein. He wants everything guaranteed in advance with no risk.

Timidity is Hussein's most enduring characteristic. Ever since he took over his kingdom in 1952, he has sought to hide in the interstices of the Arab world's murderous conflicts. Early in his career Hussein decided to avoid the fate of his grandfather, King Abdullah, who ruled before him and who tried to reach accommodation with Israel. Abdullah had been secretly negotiating a compromise with Israel and was assassinated by Palestinian extremists for precisely that reason. Hussein learned his lesson well.

During his whole tenure he has displayed boldness only once. On June 5, 1967, convinced by false assurances from Mr. Nasser that Arabs were winning their war with Israel, he decided to join the war even though Israel had urgently and explicitly assured him that it had no desire to fight Jordan. Hussein decided to risk an attack and lost. Seven years later he lost the West Bank again, this time at the 1974 Arab Summit at Rabat, where authority to reclaim the West Bank was awarded the PLO as the "sole representative of the Palestinian people." Since then, both the United States and moderate forces in Israel, particularly in the Labor Party, have been trying to give Hussein back at least most of what he had thrown away. But Hussein's timidity had reasserted itself. He decided to lie low and try to wait out the storms of the Middle East.

It won't work. Jordan is now—with Egypt appeased, Lebanon freed, and Syria stymied—the center of the Arab-Israeli dispute and the key to its solution. As long as King Hussein blocks a solution, the Middle East will not have peace. Neither will he. As one Jordanian official has said, Hussein has the choice of going to Jerusalem or going to Switzerland.

of accepting money from the C.I.A. for the publication of his first two books, which were anti-Communist broadsides. Now there comes this *Times* article by John Corry—not previously known as an authority on Polish culture in the postwar period—to show that the attack by the *Voice* is continuous with attacks by the Polish government since the 1960s. Very little evidence is given to disprove the *Voice's* argument; instead, the argument is simply smeared. It is suggested none too subtly to millions of Americans that the *Voice* is doing the work of the Communists. But what exactly does Warsaw's ideological inquisition against Mr. Kosinski have to do with the question of his authorship? Is it not possible that an enemy of totalitarianism does not write all of his books? Is a victim of Communism really like a victim of journalism? It is hard to understand why the *Times* has so badly embarrassed itself, and the cultural discourse of this country—until you recall the puff piece about Mr. Kosinski that was the cover story of its Sunday magazine some months before the piece in the *Voice*. The *Times*, in short, had a lot riding on Mr. Kosinski's credibility. But it has not restored Mr. Kosinski's credibility. It has only damaged its own. Maybe the *Voice* owes Mr. Kosinski an apology. Clearly the *Times* owes the *Voice* one.

□ ONCE A SOLITARY BREED closeted in cold garrets, artists now roam Congressional corridors in a PAC. Instead of cozening their muses as they used to, artists in (yes) ArtPac have organized to cozen less comely sources of inspiration, those "many elected friends of the artist in Congress." But they're doing it with their usual creative flair. The ArtPac pamphlet boasts "a unique funding idea": donations of \$40 or more are rewarded with "artworks with fair market values ranging from \$200-\$5,000." (Lesser contributors get one of a series of special ArtPac posters, which will no doubt be on the walls of the right brunch places soon.) Let's hope art lovers don't stop frequenting the galleries now that there's a way they can add to their collections and claim a tax credit, too. And let's hope the idea doesn't catch on: a rifle for generous donations to the National Rifle Association, a handgun for a more modest contribution. . . .

□ FORTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "Where do we go from here? In North Africa our troops are joined in battle with the Axis, fighting determinedly to fix their feet solidly on the Barbary Coast for the final, crushing spring at the heart of the Axis. General Eisenhower's brilliant military coup has seized the imagination of the world, and the world awaits the moment when this real second front moves across the Mediterranean to smash the Nazis where he lives. What's next? What must now be done to make absolutely certain that Eisenhower and his men, and the millions who will follow the trail they have blazed so heroically, have the power—the machine might—to administer the final blow?" ("To Smash the Final Bottleneck," by Claude Pepper, November 30, 1942.)

NOTEBOOK

□ McCARTHYISM IS NOT a word to be used lightly, particularly about *The New York Times*, but no other word can convey the scurrilous quality of its Arts and Leisure section's defense of Jerzy Kosinski on November 7. Mr. Kosinski was accused by *The Village Voice* in June of employing writers and editors to produce his books, and

THE NEXT MOVE

THE BIG POSTELECTION news from the White House is that (with one possible exception) there is not likely to be much big postelection news from the White House. The exception is that Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis may at last succeed in persuading President Reagan to raise gasoline taxes, spend \$5.5 billion on highway repairs and mass transit, and create 320,000 jobs per year in an effort to undercut Democratic proposals for even bigger public works spending. The President has opposed the idea in the past, but Lewis has now won important backing from Treasury Secretary Donald Regan and Senate leaders including Republican Party chairman Paul Laxalt, the President's close friend.

Contrary to widespread expectations, however, top White House aides say there will be no Cabinet shake-up, few (if any) major White House staff changes, no moves for a grand compromise with House Democrats, and no abrupt shifts from preelection Reaganomics. All of this confounds Washington's conventional wisdom, and is not entirely to the liking of some White House advisers who would prefer to make the Cabinet "more political" and the budget less wildly unbalanced. However, "stay the course" was not just a campaign theme. It is also "the Boss's style," and for good or ill it ultimately controls how things are done.

Most political analysts and editorial writers interpreted the election returns as a call for midcourse corrections, and Administration officials don't deny that sail-trimming may be necessary eventually. But top White House advisers say that the election results were far less devastating than they might have been, and that whatever power shift has occurred between the White House and Tip O'Neill will have to be tested before there are any compromises. "We were very lucky," said one such adviser. "With unemployment as high as it is, this election represented a Democratic opportunity that they did not capitalize on. A switch of less than 50,000 votes in five states and we would have lost the Senate." The Republican loss of 26 House seats was at the high end of the White House's own preelection projections (17 to 27 seats), but far below outside estimates (some as high as 70 seats) based on the unemployment rate.

Immediately after the elections, the White House tried to sell reporters on the idea that the President's power position in Congress had actually been eroded by fewer than 26 seats—by 24, to be exact—because Republican losses were made up by the election of new Southern Democrats. The line was that Reagan's 1981–1982 pool of support was 269 Representatives, and in 1983 it would be 245, making majorities of 218 mildly more difficult, but still possible. When pushed, White House advisers

admit that they are not counting in the "fear of God factor"—the fright instilled in moderate Republicans in both the House and Senate by near-defeats caused by their previous loyalty to President Reagan. Aides to Tip O'Neill, meanwhile, claimed even before the election that the President's power had eroded so badly this year that a gain of 12 seats would give the Democratic leadership dependable control of its own House.

Asked about reports that O'Neill might seek an early meeting with the President to talk compromise, one top White House aide said that the President would almost certainly agree to a meeting, but doubted it would lead to much anytime soon. "You don't compromise by going right out the day after the election and saying, 'Let's compromise.' That demonstrates a certain weakness that may not exist. The truth is that we will not have a compromise before we have a test, because we don't know where we are in terms of voting strength and they don't know where they are." The White House also is reluctant to seek any immediate compromises because "last year we busted our butts trying to compromise with Tip," only to fail to reach an agreement. On his side, O'Neill seems to believe that he, too, tried to be agreeable last spring, only to have President Reagan try to blame Democrats for seeking Social Security cuts.

JUST AS there are not likely to be sudden policy moves by the Administration, neither are there likely to be any major personnel changes, according to top aides. For months, budget director David Stockman has been reported on his way out, but White House colleagues say he will remain even after the fiscal 1984 budget has been produced. Energy Secretary James Edwards left town quietly, as expected, but when asked what other changes are coming in the Cabinet, a top official said: "I don't anticipate any. It's not his [Reagan's] style." He added, "I'm not saying that some guys might not leave, and I'm not saying it wouldn't be helpful if some did, but I don't think it's going to happen." This apparently means that the White House would be pleased if Labor Secretary Raymond Donovan and some other weak or embarrassing Cabinet officers decided to resign, but Reagan apparently will not ask them to leave or permit White House aides to force them out.

If anyone does choose to leave, the priority in seeking replacements will be "political strength." According to one aide: "We need a Cabinet that's more politically sophisticated, politically attuned. I think we need to be more aware of these election results, quite frankly. We need to be thinking in terms of Hispanics, women. We need some more Drew Lewises and Don Regans, who are good advocates, good surrogates, and people who can connect up with groups that are alienated—labor, women, and minorities." But, at the same time, this aide added: "I don't think it's going to happen."

What *is* happening inside the Administration—and would be big news if it were carried on more visibly—is

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another effort to persuade the President that measures must be taken to control the federal deficit, now projected at between \$150 billion and \$200 billion for fiscal 1984 and (more dangerously) for every fiscal year into the foreseeable future. Because President Reagan's defense increases have matched his domestic spending cuts, federal outlays comprise nearly 23 percent of G.N.P. His tax cuts, plus indexing, will reduce revenues to about 19 percent, creating a "structural deficit" of 5 percent of G.N.P. That \$150 billion to \$250 billion (in fiscal 1985) amounts to as much as 75 percent of the country's annual "savings pool"—the source of borrowed money for industrial investment. Such a federal drain on the savings pool inevitably will drive up interest rates and hinder recovery.

This diagnosis of the dilemma facing the Administration is now almost unanimously accepted by President Reagan's top economic and political advisers. In a recent *New York Times Magazine* article, the paper's White House correspondent, Steven Weisman, brilliantly explained how one by one the Reaganites (except Reagan) came to see the flaws in Reaganomics. Those few hard-line supply-siders who fought against tax increases during last year's budget battles have left the Administration and Representative Jack Kemp has limited access to the President. "We are all counter-Keynesians now," said one aide. "In this sense: at this magnitude, larger deficits don't stimulate the economy. They drag it down." The major counter-Keynesians are the Administration's official economic "troika"—budget director Stockman, Treasury Secretary Regan, chief economic adviser Martin Feldstein—plus Secretary of State George Shultz, a former budget director and treasury secretary who now meets with the group regularly.

This group is convinced that deficits have to come down, but there is no agreement yet on how, and how quickly. Last year a massive campaign was launched by Stockman and White House chief of staff James Baker to convince the President to raise taxes and slow defense increases—in addition to cutting domestic spending—to reduce the deficits. This year, aides say, business and Congressional leaders are not being called in to work Mr. Reagan over. Instead, "we are giving the President an overview of the problem in its full magnitude," one aide said, "and then he will decide."

THERE IS NOTHING but agony for the President in this decisionmaking process. To cut defense spending or raise taxes means to turn away from his most cherished priorities. Even though, as Weisman's *Times Magazine* article showed, the Reagan defense spending goals were set in a shockingly haphazard fashion, and even though defense spending is rising by more than 8 percent per year (when Mr. Reagan called for a 5 percent increase during the 1980 campaign), Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger is telling him not to ease up because the Soviets will take it as a sign of weakness. Donald Regan is telling him not to raise revenues (except

through a gasoline tax) because the tax code has been changed enough already in the last two years, and because Congress has not met its spending-cut goals. White House counselor Edwin Meese apparently agrees with Weinberger and Regan. The President probably would like to chop more from domestic programs, but David Stockman is telling him that except in certain areas (such as hospital costs) not much more can be saved, and any new cuts will be politically expensive. "The President is like a mouse in a cage," said one aide. "Every single exit is a terrible one."

One possible way out is to use all three exits simultaneously, with what champions advertise as a "balanced program" of budget cuts, defense cuts, and revenue increases. Some of these advisers say that the President does not have to show a balanced budget at all—merely show progress toward a balanced budget—in order to mollify Wall Street and the Federal Reserve and keep interest rates down. On the other hand, the President still is in favor of a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution, which seems to demand a "steep descent" from present deficits.

And there is yet another possibility, which aides suggest is the likeliest—that Mr. Reagan will submit a new budget to Congress that calls for deep new cuts in domestic spending, especially in entitlement programs, but no changes in his current policies on defense and taxes, and that when Congress rejects the document, a bargaining process will begin. If this is the strategy that Reagan finally chooses, it means that the big news from the White House will not come in the postelection period of 1982, but in furious budget combat in 1983.

MORTON KONDRACK

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PAC HITS FAN

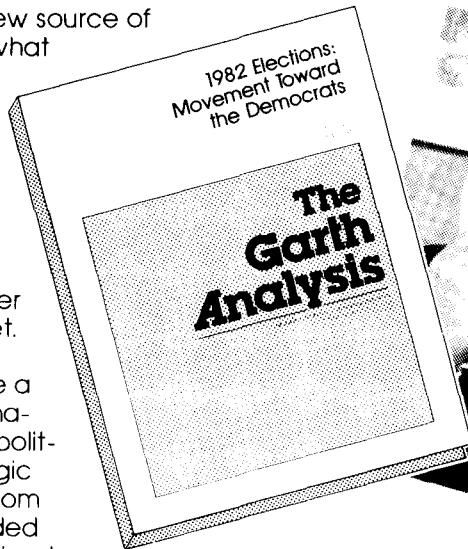
IN THE WAKE of the 1982 elections, a force to be reckoned with has petered out into an ill wind. The richest and hitherto most dreaded of the Political Action Committees, the National Team for Promoting Itself and a Conservative Congress (NTPICC), aims to guide public debate into a vortex of underlying negativity in such a way that the overriding importance of NTPICC is revealed. In the 1982 campaign, NTPICC spent \$40 million to spread 40 rumors, to direct-mail 400 outright lies, to place 4,000 unflattering advertisements, and to deliver 40,000 demagogic salvos, generating a 40 percent higher fear factor. However, only three candidates targeted by NTPICC were defeated: Rep. Paul J. Mangle (D-Mich.), Sen. Joseph P. Skorfones (R-Ill.), and Rep. Dominic

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Egregio (D-N.Y.). Each had received a 50 percent rating from the Americans for Democratic Action and a 50 percent rating from the American Conservative Union, as NTPICC's ads and press releases repeatedly pointed out in denouncing the three as "wishy-washy" by comparison to NTPICC's own decisive tornado of ads and press releases.

In Tennessee, where Republican Senator Winton K. Nullings was beaten in his bid for a fifth term, NTPICC circulated a cropped photo purporting to show his Democratic opponent, Rep. Maurice B. Spran, all alone. But Spran's staff indignantly released the original, showing a number of active, involved staff members, cute interns, and ABSCAM informants in the picture. The fine points of the photographic fraud were not lost on the voters, despite their *perception* of what *might* have been true had the truth lain somewhere.

In an attempt to defeat Democrat Joseph F. X. Scullery Jr., who was running for a Massachusetts Congressional seat, NTPICC aired 400,000 TV spots featuring pirated footage of a National Endowment for the Arts-funded Lesbian dance troupe, dressed in ecclesiastical garb and miming the 16th-century papal ban on opera while a voice-over charged that Mr. Scullery was dodging the issue of federally subsidized opera as a form of government-imposed birth control. Mr. Scullery remained unaware of the commercials, but even if he had not, he would have *appeared* to remain unaware of them.

THOUSANDS of schoolchildren were hired by New Jersey NTPICC to deliver complimentary frozen ducks to undecided households. But the bribery tactic backfired on incumbent Republican Congressman Phil ("Pete") Musser, who spent the rest of the campaign denying that he had ever said the freeze was a canard. And in Florida, Republican Congresswoman Estelle Hexler never recovered from her 40-point drop in the polls when her elderly constituents were deluged with NTPICC mailings of "ballot cards" asking whether they favored a constitutional amendment to mandate that mandatory prayers be printed on Social Security checks in place of payable dollar amounts. In both cases, the facts of the matter were difficult to establish in the absence of a certainty that the matter existed, and exit polls showed a voter failure to receive this or that *impression*.

NTPICC may have been weakened by the recently published book *A Pac With the Devil*, by the late Percy Prang, which asserts that NTPICC's leader, Yancy Lang, who has vigorously supported the death penalty, has himself been dead for four years. NTPICC's power may also be eroded by a newly formed anti-action-committee action committee, Bust Action Committees with Plain-Ass Common Sense (BACPACS), which is already planning a defense of Sen. Sam Spofford (D-Va.) for 1984. Spofford is sure to be singled out by NTPICC, because it is angered by the way his frequent, popular appearances on D.C.-area TV and radio talk shows deplete the air time

available for NTPICC to single him out.

NTPICC has already announced that most of its resources for 1984 will go into targeting five Democratic and five Republican members of the House: John Peter Telly (D-Conn.), Gary G. McGreen (D-Ore.), Martha Fortfield Garglan (D-Pa.), Paul J. Kowlicki (D-Minn.), Bill Bobbin Jr. (D-Vt.), Hamilton R. Schneehart (R-Calif.), Mengel A. Puppe (R-Ga.), Earl B. Ninick (R-Okla.), John O. Calf (R-Nev.), and Ermeto P. Invigorita (R-N.J.). NTPICC argues that these people are "deadwood," since their votes in the House cancel each other out. This theory may be irrefutable, but if it can be *seen* as speckled with flaws, NTPICC itself might be on the spot.

VERONICA GENG

Veronica Geng writes for *The New Yorker*.

'The irony of Southern history.'

WALLACE'S REBIRTH

EVEN IN George Wallace's natal village of Clio, his comeback wasn't that big a deal. On the Saturday before the November 2 election, I spotted only one bumper sticker warning that this was Wallace Country, and the plain orangish-pink and blue WALLACE signs along the evacuated intersection that is downtown Clio were outnumbered by rusting "Drink Coca-Cola" plaques. For a man who in two previous terms spent \$505,000 of the state's highway budget on pictures of himself, Wallace ran a faceless campaign, with hardly a still photo to offset his sudden shyness before live or television audiences. It's a wonder he bothered to wipe black shoe polish over his unrecognizably hoary coiffure.

I drove a friend's Chevy pickup 65 miles an hour down the sandy-shouldered roads of Barbour County to get to Clio's Fourth Annual Chitlin' Jamboree, sponsored by the Greater Clio Ruritan Club and the Alabama Farm Bureau, Pork Division. The Ugly Man Contest was to be followed shortly by the Drawing for Ham and the Parajumping Exhibition. But I missed the Greased Pole Climb, the Tobacco Spitin' Contest, and one of the last campaign appearances—it took place earlier than scheduled—that George Wallace will ever make.

"How was George's speech?" I asked the plaid-jacketed man who sold me black-eyed peas in the old high school building where Wallace matriculated.

"I shook his hand on his way to the platform," he beamed, and nodded me toward the ice tea.

"I couldn't hear it so good from here," said the woman who sold me a jar of homemade pepper jelly. "But I reckon it was just fine."

"I expect he'll go in," said the woman selling pecans dressed up as mice. "Where you from, sugar?"

Nine eyewitnesses said he spoke and spoke good. A tenth had a different view. "He didn't speak," said the woman selling chocolate-chip cookies. "Some man with him spoke—guess he read his speech for him," she insisted. "George had a sore throat."

Even if only 10 percent of a given audience noticed, Wallace's frequent refusals to orate—"laryngitis"—raised the only truly engaging question of the campaign: had he suffered a stroke ("E dawk li' thith"—like an old man with no teeth," explained a housewife I know), and was his staff covering it up? They did, in fact, keep the lid on his 105-degree temperature and the round-the-clock medical supervision he had for the two days before the election.

Speculation about Wallace's health inevitably led to discussion of the only other liability of his candidacy: his wife, Lisa, a woman of obvious glandular vigor. The former Linda Taylor, of Jasper, she legally changed her first name in the service of her career—a country-singing act with her sister Mona. She lost points with the public when her coal-magnate daddy had to sue her for the share of his estate she had appropriated while he was in a coma. And it hadn't helped that her marriage to Wallace was announced amid rumors of a reconciliation between him and the popular C'nelia. She emerged recently from four weeks of hospital treatment for "emotional stress" to warn voters off her allegedly untrustworthy and drug-dazed ex-husband. The last time she saw him, shortly before his September 1981 wedding to Lisa, C'nelia recently told a U.P.I. reporter that he had a bottle of tranquilizers in his pajama pocket.

IF PREFERABLE to the bloody shirt, the pajama shirt was hardly the kind of issue of which memorable campaigns are made, and, certainly by Dixie standards, this one was rhetorically lackluster. Both Wallace and his opponent, Emory Folmar, seized on the state's 14-plus percent unemployment rate as the next governor's chief concern. But Folmar, a shopping-center developer turned Mayor of Montgomery, was constrained from advertising his faith in Reaganomics (or even his party affiliation) before an electorate that blamed Reagan for its sour economy. Wallace, on the other hand, offered positive proof of his ability to attract jobs to the state: the National News Media (the same news media that used to be in Communist cahoots with the other "sissy-britches intellectual morons" up north) was interested in his reelection. Folmar pointed out that the notoriety had nothing to do with Wallace's economic policies, but no one seemed to care.

Indeed, it was hard to figure what the voters did care about. Even in the absence of other combustible concerns, the so-called social issues that had inflamed Ala-

bamians only two years before were left conspicuously alone. (Wallace was born again in the meantime, just in case.) Emory Folmar received the official blessing of the state's Moral Majority with the noncommittal stoicism that used to greet endorsements from the Klan. Though not exactly a liability, it wasn't the kind of thing you wanted to have on your campaign literature. The high point of Wallace's demagoguery was to call Folmar a "rich, gun-toting Republican." This was a far cry from the old oratory that his biographer Marshall Frady likened to "an orchestra perpetually tuning up—a cacophony of peevish and exasperations." And no one bothered to point out that Wallace didn't have any objections to firearms in 1967, when he told a journalist, "They [the 'niggahs'] start a riot down here, first one of them to pick up a brick gets a bullet in the brain, that's all."

A MONTH AGO, an estimated 60,000 to 70,000 mostly rural blacks voted for Wallace in a runoff against a qualified, liberal opponent; Wallace won by fewer than 20,000 votes. The National News Media, with occasional snorts of skepticism, were content to quote Wallace's 1963 "Segregation forever" inaugural speech, pronounce him no longer a segregationist, and call it an era. *Time* magazine's Lance Morrow went so far as to transfigure Wallace into Jesus Christ, nimbus and all. Instead of setting an example for outlaws (the gruesome church bombing in Birmingham occurred the Sunday after the Governor used state troopers literally to block federally ordered desegregation of the city schools), Wallace was "consoling and almost, one thinks, healing." There was certainly temptation to find in the Wallace-black alliance some lesson in redemption, in human perfectability. Here was a triumphant neo-Populist coalition of poor whites and blacks. Tom Watson, the famed Georgia Populist of the 1890s, devolved from a man of enlightened principle into a racist demagogue. Wasn't it possible for an evil spitemonger to turn to righteousness?

Perhaps it was a belief in redemption that explains why so many blacks supported Wallace over a more attractive alternative. It may be no more reducible than, say, the reason Huey Newton's parents named him after Huey Long: he was there, too hulking a fixture of history either to ignore or to reject.

On Election Day, Abraham Woods, his bodyguard, and I drove around the predominantly black western section of Birmingham, from the bleak bungalows whose trenched yards become parking lots during big football games at Legion Field, to the ranch houses of Titusville, featured not so long ago on city postcards captioned "Beautiful Negro Homes." Woods is a black minister, veteran of the 1960s demonstrations and now the local head of S.C.L.C., a busy spokesman for the black community. A remark he made around primary time received so much air play on local radio and TV that some felt it became more self-fulfilling prophecy than wry admonishment. "Black people tend to be very

forgiving," he said. "In some instances they are more forgiving than they ought to be."

Seventeen years ago, in a civil rights meeting recorded for posterity by a Birmingham Police Department detective, Abraham Woods noted that Wallace was seeking a second term and said: "Let him have it, he's our best friend, God works in mysterious ways." On November 2, 1982, Woods was not only voting for him, but also campaigning. There he was, poll-hopping through black neighborhoods, seeing that volunteers were well stocked with sample ballots (JUST PULL THE BIG LEVER BY THE ROOSTER, they said, AND VOTE DEMOCRATIC), dispensing lessons about the historic attitude of the Republican Party toward his race. Considering the gubernatorial alternatives, black turnout was high (over 50 percent) in Birmingham, where they pronounce Clio as if it were named after the queen of Egypt instead of the muse of history—and where they have *never* loved The Governor.

In the weeks preceding the election, some blacks

expressed bitterness and embarrassment over their leadership's tacit—and in a few cases explicit—endorsement of Wallace. But on the day itself, one detected no trepidation, little sadness, and considerable zany appreciation for what C. Vann Woodward would call "the irony of Southern history."

Seventeen years ago, Woods predicted, "History will show how little a man George Wallace is." And to younger voters, he has already become an insignificant, almost benign character. "He can't turn back the clock," said Woods. "I think all Mr. Wallace can do is clean up his image, and I think he wants to do that." Blacks, indeed, have no cause to fear George Wallace. They have crossed him many times, and they have never lost.

DIANE MCWHORTER

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Protestant guilt, Catholic rancor, Irish suffering.

WAR WITHOUT END

BY MARY BREASTED

Belfast

THE AWFUL BUSINESS has started again. Almost nightly since the October 20 Northern Ireland Assembly elections, the people here have listened to poignant broadcasts in which the relatives of kidnapping victims plead for the lives of their loved ones. Usually the pleas have been in vain, and the victims have been found shot or bludgeoned to death, fresh casualties of the black-hearted men who hold all of Northern Ireland hostage to their hate. Violence is not a new thing here. The modern troubles have been going on for thirteen years. But the terror has been newly escalated in the aftermath of the Assembly elections, as if to teach a ghastly lesson to James Prior, the British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whose idea it was to create the Assembly as a first step toward bringing local government back to this seemingly ungovernable province.

In the months before the elections, Ulster's politicians had repeatedly warned Mr. Prior that his Assembly plan

could go badly awry, but no one realized quite how badly until the votes had been counted. Fully one-third of the Catholics voted for Sinn Fein, the political wing of the Provisional Irish Republican Army. Their vote was unquestionably a mandate for violence. Sinn Fein's strategy to "take power with the ballot paper in one hand and an Armalite [rifle] in the other" had been widely publicized.

The great majority of the rest of the Catholics voted for the Irish nationalist candidates of the Social Democratic and Labor Party (S.D.L.P.), who strongly condemn the I.R.A.'s terrorist tactics. But both they and the Sinn Fein candidates had pledged to abstain from all Assembly activities if elected, protesting that the Assembly could effectively deny the Catholics a real voice. The fourteen S.D.L.P. victors and five Sinn Fein winners say they will keep their pledge. Without them the Assembly cannot function as anything more than an echo chamber for Protestant Unionist views.

It is now clear that Mr. Prior seriously underestimated the magnitude of Catholic discontent here. He has been at pains to say that the Sinn Fein vote was nothing new,

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that it was "always there" in the Catholic community, and simply was never exercised before. But he is wrong. Sinn Fein's candidates and canvassers are very young, and they are perceived correctly by everyone else here as a potent new force in Northern Irish politics, the new generation of Irish nationalists who, after ten years of watching their elders gain very little through the non-violent efforts of the S.D.L.P., have chosen the men who fight with the ballot and the gun.

The consequences of Mr. Prior's error in judgment already have been disastrous. The election has given Ulster's killers fresh justification for their carnage and has given impetus to the I.R.A.'s young supporters. The I.R.A. has seemingly taken the vote as a signal to step up atrocities; in the two weeks following the election, it kidnapped and killed a part-time Ulster Defense Regiment sergeant and blew up three members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. And the Protestant terror gangs, perhaps seeing the Sinn Fein vote as an enemy challenge, are suddenly more active here than they have been since the mid-1970s. They shot a Sinn Fein election agent three days after the polls closed, and they too took a kidnapping victim and murdered him, leaving the body, virtually without a face, lying in a Belfast gutter. Not to be left out of the horrible tit-for-tat game, the Irish National Liberation Army, a group of breakaway I.R.A. members who kept up a steady barrage of terrorist bombings and shootings during the election campaign, has announced that it will murder three Protestants for every Catholic killed.

AN ELECTION in such a violent land would be difficult at any time. But a number of factors had converged before the Assembly election to make Mr. Prior's plan a particularly futile exercise. Relations between Britain and the Republic of Ireland had grown chillier than they had been since Bloody Sunday, that last Sunday in January ten years ago when British soldiers shot and killed thirteen Catholic civil rights marchers in Londonderry, precipitating riots that led to the dissolution of the Northern Ireland Stormont Castle Parliament and the imposition of direct British rule over the province. Relations between Catholics and Protestants also were worse than they had been in years. The I.R.A. prisoners' hunger strikes, the Falklands war, the electoral victories of I.R.A. Parliamentary candidates (who ran without opposition from the S.D.L.P.), and the rigidity of the British and Irish prime ministers all contributed to the pre-election hardening of attitudes here. Since the fundamental dispute between Protestants and Catholics is not over religious affiliation (although they continue to bash each other for that reason), but over the question of national allegiance, the relations of the two sovereign states inevitably affect what happens in Ulster.

Britain's Margaret Thatcher and Ireland's Charles J. Haughey both have cultivated a belligerent nationalism, and they have not spoken to each other since the Falklands war. Mr. Haughey is angry that his govern-

ment was not consulted in the drawing up of the Northern Ireland Assembly plan, which he called "unworkable" before the election and pronounced a "complete political mess" afterward. Mrs. Thatcher is reportedly still angry that the Irish government withdrew its sanctions against Argentina in the middle of the Falklands war and proposed at the U.N. Security Council a ceasefire without a demand for Argentine withdrawal. A softening of the Irish position on the Falklands was indicated when the Irish Ambassador to the U.N. abstained from voting on the General Assembly motion to renew negotiations between Britain and Argentina about the future sovereignty over the Falklands, a motion Britain strongly opposed.

THE IRISH REPUBLIC'S general attitude toward Britain may well become more conciliatory in the aftermath of the sudden collapse of the Haughey government on November 4. But the identity of the next Irish prime minister will not be certain until the new Irish Parliament meets to elect him in December, following general elections on November 24. And it is clear that the outcome of the Southern Irish election will do very little to improve the fortunes of the Northern Irish Assembly, for both Mr. Haughey and his chief opponent, the Irish opposition party leader, Garret FitzGerald, have expressed disapproval of the Assembly plan.

Mr. Haughey has called for an "all-Ireland" solution to the Northern Ireland problem, which feeds the Unionists' omnivorous paranoia about living in a state in which they would be a minority, and encourages the Catholics' dream of a united Ireland. Both Dr. FitzGerald and Mr. Haughey have suggested that residents of the North ultimately could be given the right to either British or Irish citizenship. Dr. FitzGerald has said that Ireland should first make itself more attractive to Northern Protestants by altering its constitution "to produce a revised document such as might have emerged in an independent all-Irish state containing a 25 percent Protestant minority"—repealing the constitutional ban on divorce, for example. But Mr. Haughey wants to make no such changes until the Unionists agree to sit down with Irish nationalists from the whole island to plan their collective future. Each leader sees the Assembly as irrelevant to their shared goal of uniting the two Irelands.

Mrs. Thatcher did not comment publicly on the Assembly plan during the Northern campaign, but after Mr. Prior said during an Irish radio interview that he would not accept an Assembly executive that did not include Irish nationalists, Mrs. Thatcher told Unionist politicians (in a letter they publicized shortly before the election) that the Assembly executive was not the only place where Irish nationalists' aspirations could be accommodated. This fed the Catholics' fears that the Assembly was going to be rigged against them, and it encouraged Unionists' dreams of a restoration of Northern Irish government with them in control.

The Northern Ireland Assembly legislation, enacted last July "by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament," called for the election of seventy-eight members whose only power initially would be advisory. In stages, and only with the approval of the Northern Ireland Secretary of State and of the British Parliament, the Assembly essentially will design a system of local government. But the act requires that at least 70 percent of the Assembly support a proposal before it can be sent to Parliament, or alternatively, that a straight 50 percent majority support it, *and* that the Secretary of State must believe the proposal "is likely to command widespread acceptance throughout the community" before it can be forwarded. Parliament may not act on any Assembly unless it too is convinced the proposal would "command widespread acceptance throughout the community."

The "widespread acceptance" phrase is meant to be a code for acceptance by Protestants and Catholics, or so Mr. Prior has maintained. But Catholic politicians feel that the phrase leaves too much room for hedging, and they believe the Assembly could easily become the captive of the Unionists even if they were to participate in it. They had asked Mr. Prior to include an "Irish dimension" in the act, some kind of provision to involve the Irish government in the planning for Ulster's future. When their demand wasn't met, they decided to run as abstentionists, and John Hume, the S.D.L.P.'s leader, hoping to show the voters that he too could make constructive proposals, called for the establishment of a "Council of Ireland" to be composed of Northern and Southern politicians, and to be established whether or not the Unionists agreed to join it. Sinn Féin's success in the Assembly elections has embarrassed Mr. Hume in this effort, for many of the Republic's politicians refuse to have anything to do with Sinn Féin, and the Irish government bans Sinn Féin candidates from its state-controlled television and radio stations.

MR. PRIOR has been trying to convince the S.D.L.P. to participate in the Assembly, but every time he makes an offer—such as the statement that Irish nationalists would serve on the executive—the Unionists cry foul. He is at an impasse more formidable than the one he confronted when he arrived here thirteen months ago, full of British optimism about using reason and fairness to straighten out an irrational situation. He tried to be particularly sensitive to the Unionists' paranoia, because they had the worst reputation for assembly-wrecking. Ironically, by arousing Catholic anger, his efforts have given Unionists' fears a great leap forward. Mr. Prior now has the leader of the moderate Unionist party, James Molyneaux, clamoring for an immediate change in the Assembly Act to give his people control over security, a power they abused so egregiously before 1969 that British soldiers were sent into Northern Ireland precisely to take it away from them. On the other

side, Mr. Prior has the formerly cooperative John Hume telling him the Assembly is "dead as a Dodo." And as if that weren't enough, most of the British and Irish newspapers have pronounced the Assembly a failure before its first meeting, and several of them have predicted it will be disbanded within a few months.

THE ULTIMATE THREAT to this or any future assembly designed to bring local government back to Northern Ireland is the profundity of the divide between Catholics and Protestants and all the bitter history that has created it. The Catholics are anti-Protestant not only because the Church teaches them that Protestantism is not the true faith, but also because Protestants conquered them, stole their best lands, outlawed their religion, banned their language from the schools, and, in recent decades, subjected them to cruel discrimination in employment, housing, and access to higher education. The Protestants, for their part, are anti-Catholic not only because of their aversion to the Pope and to Catholic dogma, but also because of the guilty fear that Catholics will someday rise up and conquer them in turn. The Catholic resentment fuels itself on eight hundred years of history, beginning with the first Norman invasions of Ireland. Though their English conquerors were not Protestant until the sixteenth century, the distinction between English and Protestant has long since been blurred in Irish Catholic memory. The Protestants' resentment and guilt feeds on the three hundred years of struggle since their ancestors began settling in Ireland, with land grants from Queen Elizabeth and James I or with jobs as servants to the English plantationists, when all classes met with violent resistance from the native and defiantly Catholic Irish.

There was a time in the eighteenth century when Protestant and Catholic rebels were allied against the British in Ulster, but the British generals cunningly promoted their religious differences, and the alliance did not stick. The Irish war of independence, fought intermittently between 1916 and 1921, was technically a struggle between the British and the Irish nationalists, but it divided Irishmen along religious lines. In 1920 Parliament passed a law to partition Ireland. The following year, Irish republicans signed a treaty with Britain accepting the partition. The Irish Free State got twenty-six predominantly Catholic counties in the south and west of the island, and Northern Ireland got six predominantly Protestant counties in the northeast, a large chunk of the old section called Ulster. The Republic of Ireland, 10 percent Protestant at the time of partition, is now under 4 percent Protestant. The Catholics have remained a minority in the North, where they now make up nearly 40 percent of the population.

The I.R.A. never recognized the legitimacy either of the Irish Republic or of the state of Northern Ireland, and for the past sixty years has carried out terrorist campaigns (with long periods of ceasefire) to destroy partition. (See "The Troubles Today," by Jack Beatty,

TNR, November 15, 1980.) During the same period the Protestants have armed themselves with legal and illegal weapons, forming secret paramilitary groups or joining police auxiliary units, which are often an extra arm of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, an overwhelmingly Protestant police force.

In the 1960s two new elements of street politics emerged here. One was an expression of some Protestants' fearful bigotry and their discontent with the leaders of the Unionist Party (later to become the Official Unionist Party), who were sounding friendly toward the Irish Republic; the other was an expression of Catholic grievances, and became known as the Northern Ireland civil rights movement. While Reverend Ian Paisley led marches to protest things like the lowering of the Belfast City Hall Union Jack to half-mast after the death of Pope John XXIII, Brid Rodgers, then a young mother and now the general secretary of the S.D.L.P., led marches with John Hume to protest the government's discrimination against Catholics in the distribution of public housing. Those two movements eventually confronted each other in street clashes, and after two nights of rioting in mid-August 1969, when hundreds of Catholic homes were burned, British soldiers were called in.

The Provisional wing of the I.R.A., meanwhile, had formed its own paramilitary unit to protect Catholics in "Free Derry," the Bogside neighborhood of Londonderry, and in the Falls section of West Belfast, named after the Falls Road that runs through the center of it. According to John Hume, the I.R.A. protectors soon became aggressors. By March 1972, the situation had become so explosive that the British imposed direct rule, and by May there were 21,800 British soldiers in Northern Ireland.

SINCE THEN the British have made four attempts to set up a local government here. Each one has been wrecked by extremists, usually on the Protestant side. Over the past decade the power and prominence of Ian Paisley have grown with the size of his Democratic Unionist Party, founded in 1971. The S.D.L.P., formed in 1970 from a coalition of civil rights groups and liberal political parties, has also grown during that period. It still represents mainstream Catholics in the North. In the 1979 European Parliamentary elections, Paisley was the biggest vote-getter in the province. John Hume was second, and the size of his vote showed he had picked up some Protestant support. The S.D.L.P. does not define itself as a Catholic party, just as the D.U.P. and Official Unionist Party do not define themselves as Protestant parties. But because the S.D.L.P. wants a united Ireland and the D.U.P. and O.U.P. support union with Britain, the sectarian identification is made about each.

Last year the I.R.A. came up with a tactic that was brilliantly suited to make trouble for the S.D.L.P. It chose Bobby Sands, a prisoner on hunger strike in Maze Prison, as its candidate for Parliament. Sands won, and when he died, his supporters put up Owen Carron, a

Sinn Fein organizer from the heavily Irish nationalist district of Fermanagh-South Tyrone. Margaret Thatcher's unbending refusal to grant any of the hunger strikers' demands, and John Hume's vain efforts to get her to compromise while also trying to negotiate an end to the hunger strikes, are now thought to have added to the S.D.L.P.'s problems in attracting voters who supported Sinn Fein. Mr. Hume was labeled a "collaborationist" by the I.R.A., and graffiti artists wrote "John Hume Brit lover" on a wall near his house in Londonderry. (He would say "Derry." The "London" is a British seventeenth-century addition.) That writing is now gone from the wall, and Mr. Hume has moved away from the middle in his attempts to hold onto power in the increasingly radicalized Catholic community.

This is what keeps happening in Northern Ireland. The divisions *within* the two sides keep frustrating attempts at reconciliation, because no one on either side can deliver alone to a conference table the support of his entire side.

VIRTUALLY EVERYONE involved blames Ian Paisley for this state of affairs. He is certainly a genius at devising tactics that will stir fears and resentments on both sides, and he is more subtle than the I.R.A., using rhetoric and confrontation tactics to stir the same hatreds that the I.R.A. arouses with guns and bombs. Last July, when things were looking a little too peaceful, he led a march of Protestants through the little Catholic town of Downpatrick and caused the predictable clash between counterdemonstrators and police. Mr. Paisley's street politics is blamed for bringing down the moderate Unionist government of Terence O'Neill in 1969 and for wrecking the power-sharing initiative of the Sunningdale agreement in 1974.

Interestingly enough, he is the one powerful leader who has gone all out for the Assembly. He campaigned with the slogan, "Let's get back to the Stormont way," and he promoted the idea of a Unionist-dominated Assembly so successfully that between his party, the Official Unionists, and two independents, the combined Unionist forces won forty-nine seats, seven short of a 70 percent majority. His enthusiasm for the Assembly plan caught the Official Unionists off guard, for they had been ready to wreck it before it ever got to the election phase, and they kicked off their campaign with Paisley's old slogan, "No surrender." Mr. Paisley's enthusiasm was enough to make the Catholics suspicious of the Assembly idea, for their instinct is that whatever he likes cannot be good for them.

After the elections, Mr. Prior admitted that his original hope for the Assembly to initiate the first phase of "rolling devolution" is "stone dead." But he is making plans to call the first meeting of the Assembly, and he has said that its other function, monitoring direct rule, can still go forward as planned.

Direct rule operates through a network of civil servants. They answer to British-appointed ministers whose

headquarters are in Stormont Castle, a large Palladian building atop a grassy hill in East Belfast that is surrounded by vast lawns and graceful shade trees. On my way up the long drive to the press office of the Secretary of State, I was twice stopped at barricades and asked to open the trunk of my car, and was frisked by a female officer before being escorted to my destination. Going past the row of old stables that line the road to the side building, I heard police dogs barking, a sound that in that setting evoked images of a bygone British feudalism.

But British rule in Northern Ireland today is an extension not of feudalism but of the ailing welfare state, with its attendant problems of unemployment and stagnant industry. The unemployment rate in Northern Ireland is nearly 20 percent. Britain sends nearly \$7 billion a year into the province. Both Catholic and Protestant schools are state supported. And the Catholics have been given fair access to public housing through an eligibility system based on need. To Americans whose fleeting perception of the Northern Ireland problem is derived from news photos of British soldiers patrolling in front of "Brits out" graffiti, none of this British largesse is apparent. But Northern Catholics are aware of it, and, except for those in the I.R.A. and Sinn Fein, they don't want the British out, unless the disengagement is made part of a plan for uniting the two Irelands.

Of course, this is the very thing the Protestants fear most. There was some sign that Protestant intransigence was easing during Garret FitzGerald's seven-month term as Irish Prime Minister, which ended last March. A delegation of moderate Unionists came down to Dublin to discuss with him his proposals for constitutional change in the Republic, and they praised these publicly.

After Mr. Haughey succeeded Dr. FitzGerald, even the moderate Unionists were put off by his stance on the North. Mr. Haughey's insistence that no changes should be made in the Republic's constitution until all the

politicians of the North and South sat down together to plan an all-Ireland constitution was seen by the Unionists as his way of saying: we won't play until the Catholics have the upper hand. And Mr. Haughey *has* agreed to support one proposal for constitutional change, a referendum asking the Irish people whether they would support an amendment banning abortion. (There is already a statute against abortion in Ireland, but the pro-lifers insist it's not enough.) The referendum proposal is also supported by Dr. FitzGerald.

If there is going to be any progress in the North, it must have the backing of John Hume and Ian Paisley, the two men who came to power by opposing each other's goals. Oddly, the two of them work very well together in Brussels and Strasbourg when they are there on European Parliamentary business. They plan strategy with John Taylor, the third Northern Ireland member of the European Parliament, who is an Official Unionist. They eat meals together, and to hear Mr. Hume tell it, in that context they even like each other. But at home they are the creatures of their constituents, and there the deepest trouble lies.

PAISLEY'S PEOPLE are an eerie folk to walk among. They do not like outsiders, for they feel the world has judged them and pronounced them evil. The women are plump and wear outfits that are inspired by the Queen Mother but are poorer, shabbier. The men are prone to wearing sideburns cut at right angles. They have the squat, stocky bodies and bushy eyebrows of the lowland Scots from whom they are descended. They have more in common with American Okies and Bible Belt fundamentalists (whose music they love) than they do with the British in Westminster or with the upper- and middle-class Protestants of the Official Unionist Party, who look down on them as social inferiors who belong to a socially inferior Protestant denomination. Most of them belong to Mr. Paisley's Free Presbyterian churches or to other evangelical churches, not to the Church of Ireland or the Presbyterian Church, the two favorites of Official Unionists. Paisley's people are teetotalers and sexual puritans who marched behind him in his "Save Ulster From Sodomy" campaign. Their politicians' literature always makes reference to the declining standards of morality in the modern age, although they can have seen very little of this if they have lived by what is preached to them. They are an aggrieved people, whose dissenting Scottish Presbyterian or Baptist ancestors were made to feel unwanted in their homeland, and it is as though they have taken the hurt of this ancient rejection and borne it in their hearts down through the generations until it has become a proud distinction of their tribe to be hated by outsiders. Their only source of social pride is their sense of superiority toward Catholics, although deep in the core of every one of them lurks the suspicion that in a fair test of talents, intelligence, and individual character, in a system that was not rigged in their favor, the Catholics might win. This is different

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from the fear that Catholics might rise up and physically conquer them, which is shared by the genteeler bigots of the O.U.P.

Hume's people are weary of their struggle, and both their anger and their apathy are growing. They have been buoyed up in the past by the belief that world opinion is with them, for the world's press has broadcast their grievances and portrayed them sympathetically as the underdogs in an unfair fight. Although their lives too are seamed with inherited hates, they are much more open, joyful, and receptive than the Protestants, perhaps because of this perception that they are not alone. They do not look radically different from Paisley's people. They too are generally short, and their women also wear old-fashioned styles, minus the Queen Mother's hats that Protestant women like. The Catholic men as a rule wear their hair longer than Protestants do. Northern Catholics have a dry, laconic humor that becomes more expressive when they have "a drop in them," and then they are quick to get angry and quick to make a joke. They are not teetotalers or sexual puritans, although to Americans they might seem to be the latter, for they are adamantly set against legalized abortion and at least accepting of the Church's support for the Irish Republic's constitutional ban against divorce. Although they frequently make anticlerical jokes, Northern Catholics will defer to Church leaders on many matters of social policy. When the British recently proposed that the Catholic teachers' colleges here be integrated with the Protestant one, a petition against the proposal was circulated after Masses, and three hundred thousand Catholics signed it.

APOLL conducted by the S.D.L.P. for the Assembly election found that at least two out of three Northern Catholics still support nonviolent methods for registering their discontent. But in many Catholic neighborhoods, the unemployment rate is as high as 50 percent, and, as Brid Rodgers wryly observed after the election, the young unemployed "make very good canvassers" for Sinn Féin. If their forces grow, the province really could be plunged into full-fledged civil war. Meanwhile, the British are taking harsh precautions against the men of violence. They have a legalized policy for detaining terrorist suspects for up to seven days without letting them see a lawyer or a judge, and terrorism defendants are tried before judges, on the theory that jurors would be too frightened to convict them. In Sinn Féin's offices, there is a poster that emphasizes the danger of loose talk, and advises people speaking with the authorities, "Whatever you say, say nothing."

Richard McAuley, spokesman for Sinn Féin, explains his followers' attitude in the pithy statement, "We have nothing to lose." Sitting in the bomb-scarred offices of the party on the Falls Road, he told me that if the British were to pull out of the North and relinquish all claim to the territory, the Unionists would make a deal with his people because "they do have interests to protect here."

The theory is that faced with the prospect of bloody civil war, the Unionists would quickly compromise with their ancient enemy. Until the election, I thought no one outside the I.R.A. believed that. But clearly, the delusion is growing in the Catholic community that the situation could be resolved by force of arms.

SHORTLY BEFORE the election, Mr. Prior was asked by a radio reporter from Ireland why he had not granted John Hume's request for the "Irish dimension" to be included in his Assembly plan. He said, "It's no good trying to push an Irish dimension down the throats of the Unionists. It's got to be allowed to grow. . . . The British can't just impose structures and hope they're going to succeed." What he failed to perceive then was the extent to which Northern Catholics feel that the present system already imposes unwanted structures upon them. Too often the British have sounded to them as though the Unionists' concerns are paramount. Catholic sensibilities are offended when the British talk about the North's intractable problem in a distanced way, as though they had had nothing to do with it. The Protestants, on the other hand, feel like a minority and often behave like one, because they are haunted by the thought that the Crown will desert them on this island of Catholics. So Mr. Prior has had to deal with a kind of double minority problem, constantly being sensitive to the acute paranoia with which both Catholics and Protestants here regard greater power. What offends one group automatically pleases the other one. Although it is possible to displease both at once, no "solution" will please both at once.

Short of resettling the Northern Protestants in the lands they came from, there is no simple solution. The British are not about to suggest that one, and the Catholics are not suggesting it, either. So somehow the British are going to have to make reparations to the Catholics that do not so inflame the Protestants that they wreck all the good will built up among the Catholics. This is what the British, in their muddling way, are trying to do now, too slowly for the Catholics, too quickly for the Protestants.

When one is exposed to this place for any length of time, one cannot help but admire the even-tempered persistence with which Mr. Prior has labored to convince people who have been enemies for so long to come together and plan their future government. Much discouraged now, and with his sights set much lower than they were a year ago, he continues to work at his task, though all, save the members of the tiny nonsectarian Alliance Party, have predicted that his efforts will come to naught. The people here do want local government that is more accountable to them than Westminster is. But they do not trust each other to put it together. As you look with bafflement at the situation, it is important to remember that nearly everyone in Northern Ireland has known someone who was murdered. Everyone here is angry and afraid.

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Elliott Twice

Only Denholm Elliott and his immediate family can be more pleased than I am that at last he has a really substantial film role. He has had plenty of film work—I first saw him in a small trenchant part in *The Cruel Sea* thirty years ago—and his name in a cast list always gives me a flick of anticipation, the assurance that I'm

Brimstone and Treacle
(United Artists Classics)

The Missionary
(Columbia)

going to see at least one well-turned (and underappreciated) performance, perhaps with sardonic genteel wit as in *Nothing But the Best*, perhaps with desperate pathetic bravery as in *Saint Jack*. But they've all been supporting roles. Most of his theater career, where his roles have been quite different, has been in his native England, so I haven't often seen him on stage. However, in 1967 he played Con Melody in *A Touch of the Poet* on Broadway, with a stifled glory that a few years later Jason Robards couldn't touch; and in London I saw Elliott do a Judge Brack in *Hedda Gabler* (1972) by which I measure all other Bracks.

Now Elliott has the biggest screen role that I've seen. It's in a film called *Brimstone and Treacle*, a title that can hardly be socko even in Britain where the picture was made, and Elliott is extraordinarily fine. Here he moves to the middle of middle-class agon. He is a London writer and publisher of spiritually uplifting poems and books, with a home and a car that seem somewhat too posh for his status, with a wife (Joan Plowright) who seems exactly right, and with a lovely twentyish daughter (Suzanna Hamilton), who has been utterly incompetent, mentally and physically, since she was struck in a motor accident a few years earlier. *The Day in the Death of Joe Egg* atmosphere of their home is especially painful because—as we see in flashback—the accident occurred when the daughter

was fleeing in horror from her father's *religioso* office, where she had discovered him *in flagrante* with his middle-aged secretary. (The wife doesn't know the cause of the daughter's accident; so the inarticulate girl is like a defused bomb in the house.) Into this ménage a mysterious, quasi-diabolical, smooth young stranger maneuvers his way and wangles an invitation to remain; and vis-à-vis this stranger, Elliott ranges through a spectrum from fuddled vulnerability to resentment to guilty acquiescence to a climax of outrage.

The salient quality in Elliott's acting is its paradoxical combination of textural breadth and cutting edge. The broad texture is built on empathic understanding of this tormented man, understanding of his milieu and mores, of how his secrets weigh on him. Unlike Jeremy Irons in *Moonlighting*, for instance, Elliott knows how this man moves and eats and listens. And this understanding is presented, not with big slapping brush strokes but selectively, incisively: the sensation of a leading edge is heightened by the agreeably grainy quality of Elliott's voice, theatrical in every desirable way, modulated with inflections of unostentatious yet knife-sharp precision.

Elliott is one of those English actors—Ian Holm and Mona Washbourne are two among others—who are not stars, possibly because they lack sexual magnetism, possibly just because of the luck of the draw, but whose art is hugely important to the theater/screen life of their time. Of course other countries have similar corps of much-better-than-supporting actors in supporting roles. There and in Britain they seem to provide certain warrants of their countries' cultural strength—in a more solid and indigent way than do some stars. Naturally, Elliott has never thought anything remotely like that while he was working, perhaps even when he was not; nonetheless, it operates through him.

Joan Plowright, who is Lady Olivier, has been visible on stage and screen just

about as long as Elliott but, for years, hadn't aroused in me the same feeling of underappreciation. She was quite all right most of the time, until in 1974 she went further: her Masha in her husband's film of *The Three Sisters* (1974), though it lacked elegance, showed surprising richness. In *Brimstone and Treacle* she doesn't have much of a role, just a long one; she is simply a gullible, sentimental biddy, but she does it with velvet-eyed fidelity.

The presumably diabolical young man who wriggles into their home is played by Sting, which is the nom de rock of a singer-songwriter with a group called The Police. I've never heard them and wouldn't know whether they were any good if I had: I *can* say that Sting is certainly not wrong to think of himself as an actor. He moves through this smarmily malevolent role with competence and menace. His imposition on this family is entirely credible, less because his lies are believable than because he's the kind of con man whom we want to be conned by even while we know he's conning. He summons up the masochist in us.

Dennis Potter, best known in Britain as a TV writer and best known in TV for *Pennies from Heaven*, is a clever writer who, like many writers who rely mainly on cleverness, is not quite clever enough. Potter takes the venerable idea of a seemingly innocent intruder who establishes

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Céleste. Jürgen Arndt as Proust in his last years, Eva Mattes as his devoted young housekeeper. Percy Adlon directed this exquisite German film with invigorating love.

Fitzcarraldo. Klaus Kinski is a wildly romantic adventurer in Peru, c. 1900. Werner Herzog's epic of the impossible-as-ideal has its bumps, but it burns with several passions.

My Favorite Year. Peter O'Toole. Over this rickety script—about a drinking film star and a live TV comedy appearance in 1954—O'Toole vaults magically.

Time Stands Still. Hungary, the decade after 1956, and how teenagers, in some ways like teenagers everywhere, are scarred by failed revolt. Direction sometimes arty, but the force comes through.

SK

himself in a household and then reveals his real self—*Tartuffe* could not have been the first in the line—and tries to give it mystical, moral, and psychosomatic resonances. The intruder may be a satanic agent (not Old Nick himself or the ending would mean a different future about humanity). The moral struggles in Elliott—anguish for his daughter, guilt about his daughter's condition, perhaps a buried dread that she may recover and speak, the knowledge of his continuing sexual frailty—make a neat torture. And the finish has a psychosomatic twist, which I can neither reveal nor certify scientifically. Potter's script is a generally good contraption, with decent enough dialogue and great stretches of interesting predictability; but it's too flashy and ultimately too silly (the smart intruder behaves with unbelievable stupidity) for the depths that have been charted.

Potter has a perfectly apt director in Richard Loncraine, which is qualified praise. This is the first of Loncraine's work that I've seen, and even without the publicity notes, I might have inferred his background of décor and antique-dealing. All the visual options in the film are overexploited: slow motion, devilish lighting from below, hyperdramatic spotlights in Elliott's office, trick emphases of the theme. (While Sting and the parents sing a hymn, we cut to a long shot of the house; the house begins to whirl; we cut to a close-up of Jesus in a sentimental painting in the house; then we whirl off into starry space for a bit.) Loncraine's "touches" are like Potter's writing—not quite clever enough. But, again like Potter, he has given his actors opportunities. He may even have helped them; at least he had sense enough to see what they could do and let them do it.

ELLIOTT is also in *The Missionary*, which also was directed by Loncraine—immediately after *Brimstone and Treacle*. Here Elliott has his usual-size role, a good supporting part in which he gives good support. The time is 1906, and he plays the Anglican Bishop of London, as a brisk, basically hard-as-nails, cheery corporate executive, out to beat the competition—Catholics, Methodists, and such. Elliott sketches the role like a master draftsman equipped with charcoal, pad, and glee.

The script was written by the winning Michael Palin, of Monty Python, who plays the leading role. If you've been watching "Ripping Yarns" on PBS, that's Palin; he wrote those scripts too, with

Terry Jones. (In one of them, Elliott was very funny in a Graham Greene cartoon—a drunken, lecherous British consul in a remote Andean town.) Like most of the British sketch actors we see—the Monty Python crew, the Two Ronnies, and others—Palin is not a revue roustabout, he's a good comic actor. He could play Sheridan, Wilde, Shaw.

As for his screenplay, I'm afraid that Palin was so afraid of writing another Monty Python script for his first solo venture—a modest story line on which are hung a lot of Python skits—that he's gone to a somewhat muddled opposite. Trying to avoid the string-and-beads

shape, trying to write an integrated script, he comes up with some very good Python skits interwoven with contradictory material—straight comedy, some straight suspense, even a sentimental ending. Palin says his first title was *The Missionary Position*. The title change not only dulled the title, it led to tonal fluctuations throughout.

Pity, because it's a nicely raunchy basic idea. Palin is an Anglican missionary, a bit of a nit, who comes back after ten years in Africa expecting to marry his prissy fiancée and settle into a country rectory. Instead the bishop sends him on another mission, into London's Dock-

WATERS OF POTOWMACK

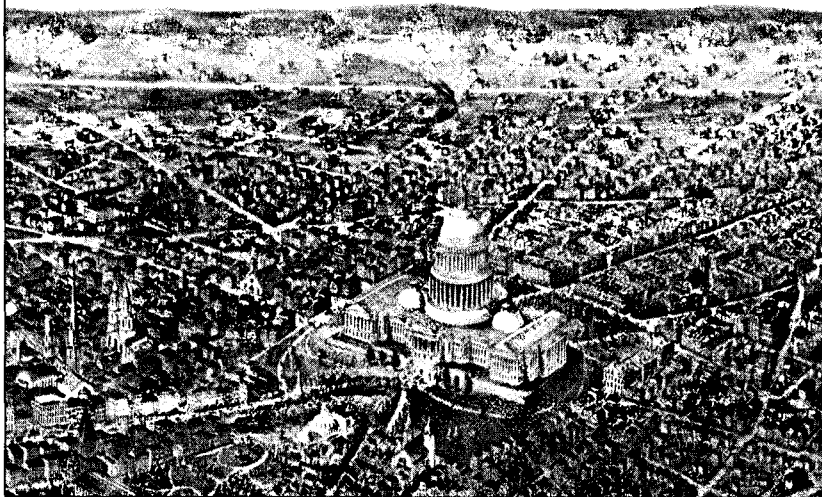
By PAUL METCALF

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land—Major Barbara country—ordering him to raise funds for a refuge for fallen women. His adventures in raising the funds and raising the women are often keenly, slyly funny. The only complaint is not the usual one about such scripts, that some of the humor falls flat: the trouble is that from time to time it wanders away from wildness.

The cast includes some other toppest notch actors: Trevor Howard, rerunning some of his crusty general from *The Charge of the Light Brigade*; Maggie Smith, as his lonely lubricious wife; Michael Hordern, as the haughty butler of a Stately Home whose self-assurance is misplaced. The costumes by Shuna Harwood are particularly lovely in Ed-

wardian sweep and richness of fabric.

Loncraine intrudes somewhat less here with visual fanciness than in *Brimstone and T.*: his chief muddling here is with dramatic structure. For example: Palin goes to a London club to meet the bishop. He enters the tomb-like foyer and is directed to a room at the end of a silent corridor. Loncraine then cuts to the interior of the noisy club gym where the bishop is overseeing sports. We get the shock of the noise before Palin does, and it spoils his surprise when he comes in.

Peter Hannan, who photographed both these Loncraine films, is a poor influence on the director, and vice versa. Each brings out a fatigued urge to prettiness in the other.

ligent, spirited, delicately poised human being pulverized by the failures of her time.

This demonstration, however, along with a somewhat shaky structure, exposes the most uncertain aspect of the play, for it assigns purely social causes to problems that may at least be partially existential. Hare doesn't provide enough information about Susan Traherne to define her conscious or unconscious motivations with any exactitude, but he intentionally idealizes her wartime experience, and even returns to it in a final flashback when she appears, young and innocent in a flower dress, to say: "We have grown up. We will improve our world." The postwar world, however, doesn't improve, and neither does Susan. She appears at the embassy in Brussels, trying to persuade a diplomat to inform a widow of the recent death of her husband, Susan's casual lover; next, she propositions a young Spiv, during the Festival of Britain, to give her a child ("Deep down I'd do the whole damn thing myself, but there we are"); then, after this sad attempt has failed for eighteen months to produce progeny, she takes a pot shot at the abandoned stud when he rebukes her class for its callousness and condescension.

During this time, Susan has been working at a number of unsatisfying jobs, first in a shipping office, then in advertising, trying to find some commitment commensurate with her memories of the war. She contracts an essentially loveless marriage with Raymond Brock, the diplomat, and effectively ruins his career when she refuses to return with him to Iran. The climactic event in their lives, and the greatest source of disillusion for their generation, is Suez, when Britain under Eden made a halfhearted final effort to preserve the Empire: "Nobody will say blunder, international farce," Susan stridently announces at a formal dinner, "Nobody will say death rattle of the ruling class." In the grip of mental illness, embittered, out of control, Susan enacts her "psychiatric cabaret," haunted by memories of wartime France, of the time when British soldiers last landed in a country where they were wanted.

It is the most resonant scene in the play, for it tells the tragic story of many wars after World War II—America's Vietnam, Israel's Lebanon, one suspects Soviet Russia's Afghanistan—wars that instead of uniting the people, divided them. It is an event that leads to the

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Good and Plenty

By odd coincidence, a British play called *Plenty* opened within days of a British play called *Good*, an event designed to ensnare all us wretched caitiffs who like to quibble with language. Theater reviewers being the most compulsive of word players, I have been unable to let

I don't think Hare entirely accomplishes his intention, but I honor him for it, and pray it has a salutary influence on American playwrights, most of whom are still engaged in counting kitchen angels on the heads of domestic pins.

Plenty traces the career of a spirited Englishwoman from her youth as a courier, aiding the French resistance against the Nazis, to her collapse, some fifteen years later, into peacetime disillusionment—paralyzed by anomie, riddled with depression, rotting with despair and psychic rust. Hare's heroine, Susan Traherne, represents a particular example of a general condition, the personification of a hopeful, idealistic generation disaffected by a nation in moral collapse. It is Hare's conviction that World War II represented England's last heroic moment (the play was written before the Falkland victory restored some of the country's lost pride), after which it experienced a series of demoralizing deceptions and compromises, tied to the loss of empire. Ironically, this was a time of relative affluence, an era of peace and plenty; it was also a period when the relationship between the individual and the family, between the individual and society, began to break down. Susan Traherne is not Everywoman, but her condition is representative of the entire English middle class in showing an intel-

the occasion pass without notice, a failure you may have noticed from my title. I did, however, successfully resist the temptation to review both plays in tandem—less through noble motives than out of fear of being stoned. Let me just say that although *Good* fails to live up to its name, *Plenty* almost delivers the promised cornucopia.

David Hare's play, now appearing at the New York Public Theater, is an ambitious effort to create a comprehensive X-ray of England's soul following World War II. Taking social fluroscopes is an important, even crucial, dramatic function—it was Chekhov's motive in *The Cherry Orchard*, for example, and Shaw's in *Heartbreak House*—though such tasks have grown more difficult as the diagnostics have grown more complicated.

Plenty

by David Hare

The Wake of Jamie Foster

by Beth Henley

death of one of Hare's most interesting characters, Leonard Darwin, the ambassador who served as Brock's mentor, after Darwin has lost all belief in his calling as a result of the country's bad faith. But fiascos like Suez are not enough to explain Susan's addiction to drink and drugs, her suicide attempts, or her indifference about sleeping, as she says, with men that she knows. Nor does the plea of affluence, though it is one that Susan herself suggests: "Too much money, I think that's what went wrong. Corrupts the will to live." There is truth in the remark, but also the motive hunting of a free floating, perhaps motiveless, disenchantment, which, like Iago's evil, is responsible for extreme, inexplicable acts that defy explanation. In one scene (worthy of Strindberg), she decides to give away her house in Knightsbridge, strips it, throwing priceless antiques out of the window, and finally takes a shot at her infuriated husband after he threatens to have her committed.

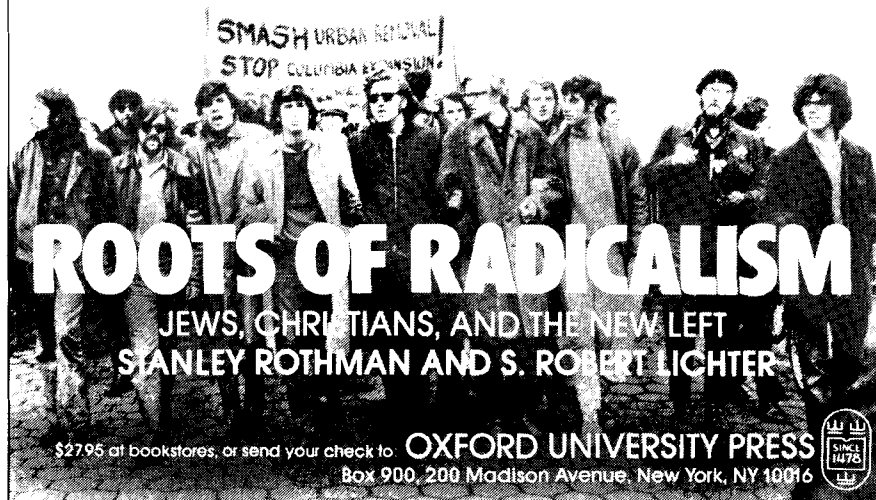
STILL, if Hare is not enough of a poet to penetrate Susan's despair, he is enough of a playwright to dramatize it; and he is a gifted artificer of blistering, lacerating dialogue. Judging from his work here, he is also a strong director, confidently guiding his talented cast through modulated performances. The passionate Kate Nelligan was ill the evening I saw the play, but her standby, Randy Danson, looking like a ripe Iranian Queen, demonstrated not only heroism in assuming the role on short notice (one expects such things of an understudy), but considerable power and control; her playing was entirely persuasive, if somewhat generalized due to under-rehearsal. Edward Herrmann, as Raymond Brock, proved once again that he is among our most intelligent actors, and also that he has reserves of genuine power under that ingratiating boyishness, while George Martin contributed a modest, crisp, wry, and ultimately very touching performance as Leonard Darwin. I was also impressed by Bill Moor as a steely cold British diplomat, and by Ellen Parker as Susan's confidante, sucking on a hashish pipe, and toying with a variety of fashionable political commitments. John Gunter's simple design—a gray pine floor with set pieces, backed by dark historical lithographs of people and ships—was an elegant visual metaphor for an action that moves back and forth through time like brief scenic shudders, and Nick Bicat's music and Arden

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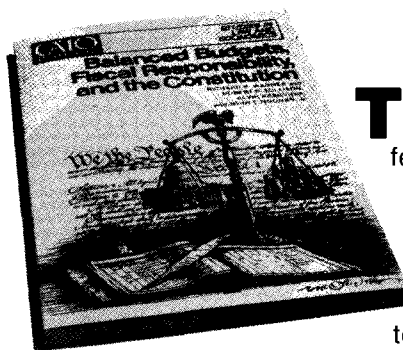
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Fingerhut's lighting were potent enhancements of the brittle mood.

I was reminded of John Osborne before his rebirth as a theatrical Colonel Blimp—the same nostalgia for lost innocence, the same mournful elegies for an England dead and gone. The alienation of left-wing English playwrights is more that of a disillusioned lover than of a malcontented outsider, which accounts, I think, for an eloquent anger sometimes in excess of the event. *Plenty* is compromised by incompleteness and structural asymmetry (I suspect the scenes in France originally sandwiched the play that is preferable to making the first one a

flashback), but it is undeniably alive. For once, the problems come from being too close to the object, not from manipulating it by remote control.

Beth Henley's *The Wake of Jamie Foster* (Eugene O'Neill Theater), on the other hand, is pure manufacture—not unlike her Pulitzer Prize-winning *Crimes of the Heart*. Critics have complained that she has badly rewritten her first play, using many of the same eccentric characters—but I found it unbearably cute the last time around. The caprices of *The Wake of Jamie Foster*, being less well-crafted, are simply more obvious and ersatz. Miss

Foster is given to sifting murder, death, and suicide through the sorghum and grits of regional Mississippi whimsy. This stuff would be a heady mix for some homespun TV series, but it is watered-down porridge for the stage, and Ulu Grosbard's effort to thicken the mixture only emphasizes its packaged taste. If Miss Henley doesn't want to end her days looking at the Waltons through the prism of Gothic comedy, she must learn to be bolder. And she should be encouraged to do more with her talents than hang crepe on regional family pictures, or black out the teeth of Norman Rockwell portraits.

Strategies of containment.

How TV COVERS WAR

BY MARK CRISPIN MILLER

In its latest TV ad campaign, devised to attract recruits, the U.S. Army offers us a potent jingle, the impression of fast action, and an unintended glimpse of truth. We hear the usual piercing voices pipe the following refrain: "Be!—all that you can be!—in the Army!" Meanwhile, we see a series of young soldiers, each confidently doing his crucial job: one mans a tank, one sits in a jet, one charts a course, etc. The stirring pitch suggests that Army life is not just fun—it's an adventure in self-fulfillment. Once we tune out its stimulants, however, the ad presents us with a prospect both more accurate and less exciting. What it shows, in fact, is not an assortment of young men "being all they can be," but a succession of intricate machines, each one tended by a placid figure in a uniform. The hardware is imposing; the soldiers are completely blank, wearing headphones, starting engines, staring into computer terminals.

For all its high-pitched jubilation, the ad depicts a grim situation: the dead-end of the history of modern war. Five hundred years of technological advance have reduced the soldier to a minor implement, fixed and simple, like a spark plug, used to fire off those spirited engines that now do nearly all the slaughtering. This demotion of the warrior seems to have begun in the fifteenth century, when the

first guns were used to shatter the preening cavalries of Europe.

Thenceforth, as the West proceeded slowly to industrialize, war moved ever further from the grasp of its participants, becoming more autonomous, not so much a human conflict as a gross conjunction of victims and machines. By the early nineteenth century, this process seemed to have become complete, eliciting applause from those who considered it a sign of progress. Hegel, for example, saw this mechanization as a step that purified warfare of its savagery:

Only through this instrumentality [i.e., the use of guns] could that superior order of valor be called forth, that valor in which the heat of personal feeling has no share; for the discharge of firearms is directed against a body of men—an abstract enemy, not individual combatants.

Others were less idealistic, more nostalgic. "The new way of fighting, the variation of weapons, the artillery, have robbed military life of that which is most attractive about it," wrote Benjamin Constant in 1813.

One no longer tastes that keen delight in the will, in action, in the strengthening of mind and body, which made the ancient heroes and medieval knights love hand-to-hand combat.

If *l'artillerie* were enough to degrade the craft of war in 1813, how can we begin to appreciate the soldier's insignificance in 1915, when machine guns, fragmentation bombs, poison gas, and depth charges first began to express themselves in force? What of the impact of such later innovations as the land mine, radar, automatic rifle, guided missile, napalm, nerve gas, Agent Orange? Since the Great War, "The new superfluity of killing agents," John Keegan tells us, has transformed "the very environment of the battlefield into one almost wholly—and indiscriminately—hostile to man."

Along with this progressive degradation of the soldier there has been a new kind of estrangement, enforced by the technology of war. Since World War I, the enormous scale of mass combat has forced even the ablest general off the field and into the armchair, to be guided by mere reports of the violence raging somewhere else. Throughout this century, this distance has been growing, as the representation becomes more precise. In the Great War, the "front" was, for the first time, far too big and vague to be overseen by the individual leaders, who therefore had to stay behind the lines, studying maps and messages. And now, those who supervise the next catastrophe will be able, theoretically, to fol-

low every development as it occurs, with the help of satellites that can track missiles and warships, locate nuclear explosions, forecast inconvenient weather, and photograph in clear detail any visible area, however tiny or remote.

All these mediating gadgets, however sensitive, must blunt the sense of war in those who use them. Translated into so many blips and telecasts, the fact of war becomes no more than a pressing abstraction, charged with suspense but not noticeably bloody. The same effect obtains for many individual soldiers, those elite technicians encased in the finest jets and tanks, which are built to devastate a countryside and its inhabitants without themselves sustaining any damage. Raised above the crawling infantry, these men are accoutred to approach a battle as their superiors are equipped to gauge it—in a mood of perfect equilibrium and snug detachment. Suspended in this state of artificial infancy—the same state that attracts us all to the promise of advanced technology—the soldier would seem to become psychologically incapable of spoiling for a fight, of closing with some tough opponent, but wants instead to search and destroy without risk, to translate his belligerence into his buttons and extensions, and simply let his fingers do the warring.

In short, it is the intended function of our weaponry to keep war at a distance, even while sustaining it. The overestimation of our hardware, for example, makes the human enemy seem alien, a freak of nature. Our jets and tanks become the indisputable proof of our superiority, things of supreme, self-evident value, so that any destructive counterattack strikes us, not as a worthy challenge, but as downright effrontery, a gross insult to the sacred weapons carrying "our boys." Those guerrillas who fight in person, on the ground, showing their teeth and hacking away in the old-fashioned manner, now seem uncanny, either subhuman or super-human, as they threaten our machinery with atavistic skills; while the Soviets, more fitting adversaries, are utterly nonhuman, a nation of

secret sites and proliferating warheads.

And, as it seems to cancel out the breathing enemy, so does our hardware seem to distance us from what wars really do, to friend and foe alike. Long immersion in technology can make war seem as safe for those who enter it as it looks to those who plan or conduct it from afar. The concept of warfare in outer space, which our military now prepares to realize at vast expense, represents the absolute fulfillment of the technocratic vision. Herman Kahn, *The New York Times* reports, "Foresee[s] the day when 'clean wars' could be fought in

der to conceal the novel agonies of battle from civilian populations ill-equipped to tolerate them.

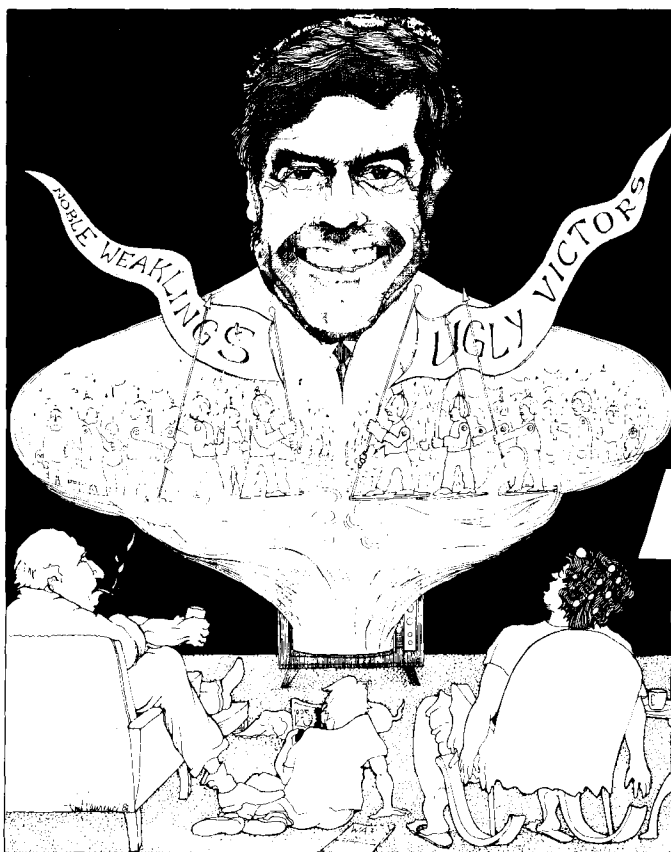
Are we helpless to survive within this process? After all this, is it possible to break down these distances? The outlook is bleak; and yet, perhaps, our salvation may be in our midst already, unnoticed until now. Technology, which has made war both invisible and all-consuming, has also blessed us, many think, with the means to remember what's at stake, by giving us television.

Is TV in fact a potent force for peace? It would appear to rediscover precisely

what those long-range weapons do, what those euphemisms actually refer to. It reminds the man who's dropped the bomb just what that bomb is meant to do to men and women, children, neighborhoods; and it deftly undercuts the pose of objectivity implicit in a government's bureaucratese: "incur-sion," "protective reaction strike," "limited nuclear exchange," "political infrastructure," etc. When such unsuggestive language fills the newspapers, George Orwell wrote in 1946, "a mass of Latin words falls upon the facts like soft snow"; that snow doesn't stick on television, which always homes in on the dead, allowing no excuses.

Modern war clearly demands this kind of plainness, as we learn from the recent history of literary style: our machinery has helped us to commit atrocities, yet has simultaneously enforced the sort of diction needed to de-

scribe them. The Civil War and "the mechanical age," Edmund Wilson points out, combined to simplify American prose, demanding "lucidity, precision, terseness"; and the later, larger wars honed down still more the language of those many writers—journalists as well as novelists and poets—who have struggled to convey the horror, paradoxically, by understating it, rendering it with photographic coolness and exactitude. Through such unflinching reporting, it might be argued, the best war correspondents, and writers like Hemingway, Remarque, Céline, and Mailer, have aspired, *avant l'image*, to replicate in words



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

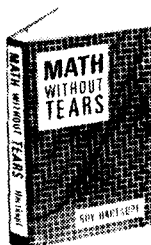
outer space," with "intense light rays," "space mines and decoys," and "robot warrior craft"; the Reagan Administration finds this Atari program appealing.

Up, up, and away—and yet the higher we soar above the scene of battle, trying to transcend the pangs of war in and through the very weapons used to fight it, the more gruesome, more protracted, more extensive war becomes. And language too has in this century been deployed to distance us from war. Like submachine guns, or gas, or atomic bombs, certain misleading terms and phrases have been devised and mass-produced by warring governments in or-

the bleak and graphic vision of TV.

The TV coverage of the war in Lebanon seems to have persuaded some that the medium, with its direct and unadorned depictions, may someday usher in an Age of Peace. Confronted with the image of the dead, the viewer can only see and sorrow, and never stand for war again. That, at any rate, is the conclusion drawn by some well-known commentators, who agree about the fact, but differ on the question of its value. A war usually

MATH WITHOUT TEARS



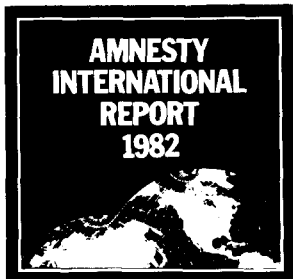
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has a purpose, writes George F. Will, of greater moment than the suffering of its victims. Will therefore distrusts TV's inherent pacifism, suggesting that, "had there been television at Antietam on America's bloodiest day (September 17, 1862), this would be two nations," since Americans "might have preferred disunion to the price of union, had they seen the price, in color in their homes in the evening." Ellen Goodman, on the other hand, sees this "price" as all important, and so asserts that TV, "intrinsically anti-war," "brings home what war is all about: killing, wounding, destroying. It doesn't film ideas, but realities," and "this is our greatest hope."

Both of these responses take for granted the idea that television does indeed, as the cliché has it, "bring war into our living rooms." We often hear the same assertion from the figureheads of television, who venerate their medium for having pulled us out of Vietnam. "For the first time," writes Dan Rather, "war was coming into our homes," and William S. Paley too recalls that "television news brought the war into American living rooms almost every night." These observers are only speaking metaphorically, but they present the metaphor as fact: they identify war footage with war itself, as if, after watching each night's newscast in the 1960s, the average viewer had to count his dead, and vacuum the shrapnel out of his couch.

IT IS, in fact, the great myth of television that the medium somehow gives us an immediate impression, conveying not images, but actualities; and its coverage of war is supposedly the most compelling example of such supreme truthfulness. This pretense of objectivity makes TV's many actual distortions—whether inherent or imposed—all the more insidious, because their camouflage is perfect, fooling not only the viewer, but even most of those who work within the medium, naively claiming to reveal "the way it is."

But what do we see when we sit at home and watch a war? Do we experience an actual event? In fact, that "experience" is fundamentally absurd. Most obviously, there is the incongruity of scale, the radical disjunction of locations. While a war is among the biggest things that can ever happen to a nation or people, devastating families, blasting away the roofs and walls, we see it compressed and miniaturized on a sturdy little piece of furniture, which stands and shines at

the very center of our household. And TV contains warfare in subtler ways. While it may confront us with the facts of death, bereavement, mutilation, it immediately cancels out the memory of that suffering, replacing its own pictures of despair with a commercial, upbeat and inexhaustibly bright.

WHILE it thus surrounds its painful images with buffers, TV also mitigates them from within. The medium may pose as the purveyor of raw history, but if war weren't suitably processed for the domestic market, if each disaster didn't have its anchorman and correspondent to introduce it, gloss it, and pronounce its simple moral, we wouldn't stand for it, any more than we could take those football games that played last year without the usual commentary. The TV newsman comforts us as John Wayne comforted our grandparents, by seeming to have the whole affair in hand. This hero functions as the guardian of our enclosed spectatorship. Therefore, when we see a newsman shot to death, as happened in Guyana and El Salvador, we react with an especial horror, because we realize that TV is not, in fact, immune to the events which it observes, but that the protective apparatus can be shattered; and if the medium does not confer invincibility on those who manage it, it surely can't safeguard its helpless viewers.

It is only this kind of violence—extraordinary, unexpected, fully visible, and inflicted on the viewer's alter ego—which can make a strong (if brief) impression on TV. For, despite all we have heard about the harrowing plainness of the footage, we simply can't and don't respond to televised violence as intensely as we would if we were right there on the scene. If we did away with all the ads and newsmen, in other words, the experience would still, necessarily, be mediated, and its impact ultimately slight. Even in extreme close-up, the medium maintains a subtle distance between viewer and victim, presenting every pang and ruin with an ineradicable coolness. Over the years we have seen, not only wars, but assassinations, executions, drownings, beatings, shoot-outs, fatal brawls, and nearly every other kind of cruelty—but how much of this do we remember vividly? If we had actually been present at the many horrible events that we have seen take place on television, we would all be as hard and wise as the Wandering Jew, or a nation of quivering shut-ins.

Because the TV image is intrinsically restrained, then, it is not the newsman's purpose to take the edge off an unbearable confrontation. His illusory control performs a different function, necessitated not by the nastiness of actual events, but by TV itself. What upsets us most about those images of aftermath is not so much their painfulness as their apparent randomness; we suddenly arrive upon this unexpected scene and ask ourselves, "Why this?" Watching the news, we come to feel, not only that the world is blowing up, but that it does so for no reason, that its ongoing history is nothing more than a series of eruptions, each without cause or context. The news creates this vision of mere anarchy through its erasure of the past, and its simultaneous tendency to atomize the present into so many unrelated happenings, each recounted through a sequence of dramatic, unintelligible pictures.

In short, the TV news adapts the world to its own commercial needs, translating history into several mad occurrences, just the sort of "story" that might pique the viewer's morbid curiosity. Thus political events appear as lurid crimes: the wars in Lebanon, El Salvador, Guatemala come to seem as chilling and mysterious as the

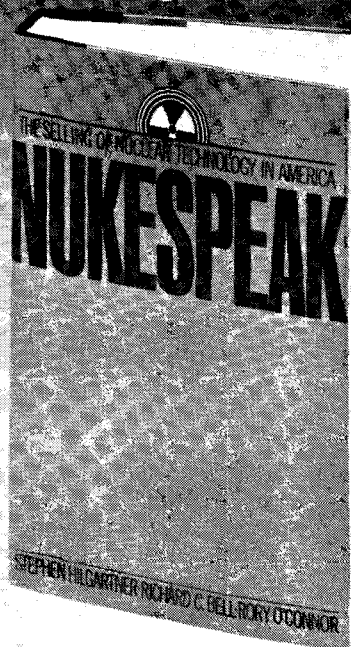
Manson killings, Patty Hearst's kidnapping, and the Tylenol affair. *Everything* begins to seem the work of chance, so that "chance" begins to lose its meaning; and the news itself, while fostering this impression, at the same time purports to comprehend the chaos. And so we have the correspondent, solemnly nattering among the ruins, offering crude "analysis" and "background," as if to compensate us for the deep bewilderment that his medium created in the first place.

While TV confuses us precisely through its efforts to inform us, so it only numbs us through its mechanical attempts to work us up. If it can't convey some sense of a war's origins or purposes, then perhaps, as Ellen Goodman thinks, it must at least enable us to apprehend war's personal results—"killing, wounding, destroying." But the medium's imminent remoteness won't permit such revelation; and so TV's custodians struggle desperately to overcome this reserve, trying to find a technical method of arousing the very sympathy that their technology inhibits to begin with. They invariably zoom in tight on the mourner's face, as if we can feel more intensely for another by looking deep inside his nose; and they cut hectically from one

appalling image to another, trying to force revulsion through a sort of photographic overkill.

Even the newsman himself has become an affective device, sending us clear signals about how we must respond. Dan Rather, entirely the creature of his medium, introduces each story on the evening news with a broad display of the appropriate emotions, each charged with his particular air of bursting mania. Before a report on some apparent upset or coincidence, he looks perfectly astonished; before an account of some atrocity, he switches on an outraged glower; before the inevitable heart-warmer, his mouth snaps into a frozen grin, and both eyes twinkle like a pair of distant headlights. Although this strained emotiveness is supposed to "humanize" the newscast, it only mechanizes all response. It is too clearly calculated to suggest or foster any genuine reaction; and it even absolves the viewers of the need to do their feeling for themselves, since they have that high-strung face to do it for them. Worked into this inept performance, war becomes the routine occasion for an automatic lamentation, and so disappears among TV's countless other momentary stimuli.

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And while television keeps us unenlightened and unmoved, it fails to evoke the conflicts that it covers. As a means of conveying the realities of war, TV is all but useless, precisely because of that very quality which, some think, make TV the perfect instrument for just such communication: its uninflected vision. For war is, above all, intense, whereas television is too detached to convey intensities. Passion, for instance, rarely registers on television except as something comical or suspect. The medium therefore undercuts the warrior's ardor: crusaders, patriots, and revolutionaries all seem equally insane on television, and the will to power seems nothing but an aberration, a recrudescence of "machismo" or a burst of "deviance." This, according to the liberal argument, is all to the good, since all "aggression" is unnatural and ought to be exposed as such. But TV also strains out the intensity of suffering, flattening the martyr as it ridicules the persecutor, trivializing both victim and tormentor. "Television especially is supposed to reveal the real tragedy of war," Peter Jennings complained from West Beirut last August, "but the camera has not adequately captured the misery this battle between ideologies has produced."

But that camera can't record "real tragedy," because death has no finality, no poignancy, on television. Because the medium cancels out the living presence of its figures, homogenizing all identity, whether individual or collective, it can't restore the impact of a single loss, or express the decimation of a people. Since no one seems to live on television, no one seems to die there. And the medium's temporal facility deprives all terminal moments of their weight.

THE UNIFORMITY of TV's view includes not just war's victims, but wars themselves. As the medium subverts all overpowering commitment, all keen belief and pain, so it equates jihad, class struggle, imperialist assault, blood feud, and border strife, never capturing whatever is peculiar to specific conflicts, and thereby reducing all wars to a vague abstraction known as War. The medium gave us a "keyhole view" of Vietnam, writes Michael Arlen, reducing that war to a mere handful of unilluminating images, rarely gruesome, never evocative. Similarly, the war in Lebanon was nothing but a lot of sunny rubble, explosions amid tall white buildings, dark women railing at the camera; the wars in Central

America, nothing more than rumpled guerrillas doing push-ups in the woods. In short, TV expresses War largely through a few aesthetic images; and even these impressions are unsuggestive. The medium's eye is too jaundiced, its on-the-scene equipment much too cumbersome, its scope too limited, to permit the full delivery of the particular atmosphere—frightening, unique, and fatally arresting—of a given war at a certain time and place.

WHILE the writer or filmmaker can recreate the ambience of a war long finished, the correspondent can't evoke the war that's going on around him. Here again, some presumed advantages of television turn out to be mere hindrances. TV's celebrated presence-on-the-scene only prevents its commentators from arriving at a larger sense, a more informed impression, the sort of grasp that viewers need in order to be moved themselves. Perhaps we can't expect a working journalist thus to transcend his own assignment, when he has a daily deadline; but there is one kind of detachment that doesn't necessitate long reflection, and that is the ex post facto reconstruction that the writing journalist must perform. However, even this achievement is beyond the TV newsman, whose expressive faculties have been supplanted by his footage: if he can show you what he sees, then he needn't labor to express it, and so his eloquence recedes, his perceptions coarsen, as all he has to do is make authoritative noises for the soundtrack, and stand there for the visual cadence, mike in hand. In covering modern war, the newsman is no less reduced by his equipment than the soldiers flying overhead, or rumbling past in tanks. Thus diminished, the newsman is not only incapable of sounding like Hemingway, but can't even reach the descriptive level of earlier war correspondents like Philip Gibbs, Herbert Matthews, Webb Miller, or Edward R. Murrow.

Unable to evoke or analyze, the TV newsman, we would think, ought at least to live up to the claims of his medium, and tell us what he knows (if anything) objectively. But TV may be the least objective medium, because it makes its loaded points from an apparently neutral mask: "The camera doesn't lie." While the news report is more or less devoid of atmosphere or telling information, that seeming vacuum is in fact filled up with expressions of the televisual world view,

which is the intellectual equivalent of the broadest, coarsest visual image. This world view is a heavy distillation of our general ideological assumptions, which are often dangerously simple to begin with. Further simplified to make a bold impression on the little screen, our ideology comes back to us in especially crude, delusive hunks, disguised, of course, as straightforward reportage.

According to this televisual reality, in a war there are no issues, and only two sides: the bullies and the little guys. Since TV brings us conflicts ahistorically, an attack must necessarily be unjustified and unexpected, its victims innocent, its authors brutal. The purpose of this melodrama is not to "awaken public opinion"—TV can't properly be said to awaken anything—as to treat the viewer to an easy dose of rage and pity. This kind of manipulation may seem quite noble, a cry of honest indignation meant to halt a heinous crime, but it is actually expressive of the subtlest bigotry, the most self-serving moralism.

For the TV news loves a good victim; and while this attitude suggests a most enlightened, charitable impulse, it is not conducive to an activist response, because this love is fatally possessive of its broken object: "Stay as you are!" it tells the oppressed. "Your battered face has earned you our esteem!" Within this schema, the worst thing that can happen to the underdog is not to die or go on suffering, but to become unpitiable, to stand up strong. Because the news allows no categories between those of the noble weakling and the ugly victor, any group that does attempt to shed its lowly status zips straight from subjugation into villainy. Whenever this occurs, the journalists turn indignant; yet they wouldn't have it otherwise, as long as the new configuration yields fresh victims for the sympathetic camera.

THIS sentimental strategy relies on and perpetuates the oldest stereotypes, and is therefore the expression of mere bigotry, largely unconscious, frequently well meaning, and therefore worse than any overt hatred. Blacks and Jews, the most despised of peoples, have been the major objects in this scheme, shifting from handsome victim to pariah, from one debased status to the other, according to how autonomous they seem to those who work on television. As long as blacks abided by the principles of King and Gandhi, they were aestheticized as Eternal Losers, eyes soulfully pitched up-

ward; but as soon as they acted on their anger, whether as rioters or Black Panthers, the news took back that holy glow and cast them as an unexpected menace, only to reinstate their wings and halos in these quiescent times. And now the Jews of Israel have forfeited their saintliness by acting as Americans used to, expropriating land that isn't theirs, teaching their enemies a cruel lesson, and doing some harm to innocents as well.

According to the news, the real crime of the Israelis was not their invasion *per se*, but their willful abandonment of the Jew's historic role as martyr. This was the dominant theme of TV's coverage of the war in Lebanon. Israel, said Richard Threlkeld from Beirut, "has confounded its enemies and . . . commanded fear and respect, but it is not the Israel that its first Prime Minister, Ben-Gurion, always imagined it would be. That Israel, that light unto the nations." Despite the denials of the networks' presidents, it was indeed the case that the coverage of that war was heavily biased against Israel, although not in a way that ought to comfort the Palestinians. The news did consistently inflate the casualty figures, dwell on atrocities, stress heavily the fact

of censorship, and otherwise depict Israel as the only guilty party. The Palestinians have also suffered at others' hands—for example, King Hussein's—but the TV news never trumpeted that outrage.

This is hardly meant to justify what Israel did in Lebanon, but merely to define the real animus behind TV's characterization of that war. For the Palestinians too have been diminished by the coverage. As Israel was excoriated for having shed her crown of thorns, the Palestinians were suddenly ennobled, playing the erstwhile Jewish role of victim. As such, they were translated into total helplessness, mere bleeding figures with no grievance, no threatening aims, no voice other than the networks' voices. "In the news," writes Ellen Goodman in approval of the TV coverage, "the sides are not divided into good guys and bad guys, but aggressors and victims." This nondistinction actually equates the "victims" with the "good guys," and thereby cancels out the complicated history in Lebanon, along with the PLO, which doesn't really fit in either TV category.

This omission preserves the simple-minded opposition that the medium imposed upon that conflict. And which side

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benefits from this reduction? Certainly not the Israelis, who, once the PLO have been erased, appear to have invaded Lebanon simply for the fun of killing Lebanese civilians; and the Palestinians too have been distorted by the TV fiction, which presents them as disorganized, unrepresented, politically unconscious, and therefore fit for pity, in dire need of the medium's own illusory protection. As in El Salvador and Northern Ireland, so here TV created a beleaguered and pathetic mass, "caught in the middle," completely apolitical, and therefore in no shape to strike back later: TV, in short, will only champion those groups whom it can sentimentalize. It has no interest in a stoic people, or in a population that takes careful steps toward self-possession. For when the Palestinians fight again, their belligerence will, as usual, appear as unexpected; and if they eventually find that they too "command fear and respect," they may also find themselves portrayed, therefore, as evil.

WHAT CAN TELEVISION tell us, then, about a war? Here is a rich example of the medium's expressiveness, chosen at random from last summer's coverage. On the *NBC Nightly News* on August 2, Roger Mudd delivered the following introduction: "Watching the shelling and the panic and the smoke and the death in Beirut on television night after night can have a powerful impact. But, as John Chancellor's commentary tonight reveals, seeing it in person is of quite a different magnitude." Chancellor then appeared from overseas, and gave us this:

What will stick in the mind about yesterday's savage Israeli attack on Beirut is its size and its scope. This is one of the world's big cities. The area under attack is the length of Manhattan Island below Central Park. Five hundred thousand people live here. One in a hundred is a PLO fighter. And it went on for such a long time: before dawn [sic] until five in the afternoon. Systematic, sophisticated warfare. The Israeli planes just never stopped coming. For an entire day, Beirut rocked and swayed to the rhythm of the Israeli attack. The Israelis say they were going after military targets with precision. There was also the stench of terror all across the city.

Nothing like it has ever happened in this part of the world. I kept thinking yesterday of the bombing of Madrid during the Spanish Civil War. What in the world is going on? Israel's security problem on its border is fifty miles to the south. What's an Israeli Army doing here in Beirut? The answer is

that we are now dealing with an imperial Israel which is solving its problems in someone else's country, world opinion be damned. Nobody knows how the battle of Beirut is going to end. But we do know one thing. The Israel we saw here yesterday is not the Israel we have seen in the past.

Chancellor clearly wanted to convey his own experience of bombardment, but his language is dead, its function having long since been usurped by videotape. What was it like? Well, "it went on for such a long time," the "planes just never stopped coming"; and these colorless phrases culminate in an image both impersonal and feebly aesthetic: "Beirut rocked and swayed to the rhythm of the Israeli attack." This image, which reduces the bombardment to a sort of urban jitterbug, does not convey a strong impression of the citizens' fear, as Murrow's London broadcasts did so well. All that the clause does, in fact, is reproduce the viewer's detached perspective; Chancellor might just as well have watched the bombing on TV, which is equally incapable of expressing others' fears and sorrows. The report's one reference to the vivid human presence is a mere cliché, thrown in as an afterthought: "There was also the stench of terror all across the city."

"What in the world is going on?" Chancellor asks. "What's an Israeli Army doing here in Beirut?" These are good questions, but he's supposed to answer them, not pose them. Rather than provide some history, he merely bolsters our incomprehension with his own, thereby turning the event into a mystery, which, like a priest, he can seem to grasp and solve by uttering a well-known moral formula: "The Israel we saw here yesterday is not the Israel we have seen in the past."

Thus, into the descriptive void of the report there comes the familiar clod of ideology, disguised as an objective fact: "But we do know one thing." At once "savage" and "imperial," Chancellor's Israel has undergone a sudden, terrifying metamorphosis. "I kept thinking of the bombing of Madrid during the Spanish Civil War." Why? Was little Johnny Chancellor, age 9, in Madrid when it was bombed in 1936? Probably not. Then is the Spanish Civil War in any way comparable to "the battle of Beirut"? Not noticeably. What Chancellor actually means by comparing this war to one he's only read about, is that Israel has indeed become its opposite, has jumped straight into that other category, since Madrid

was bombed, for Franco's sake, by the Junkers 52 of Hitler's Condor Legion.

As this report is typical of television, we must conclude that the medium does not "bring home what war is all about," but rather what TV is all about. Television's seeming transparency is in fact the medium's cleverest fiction, offering what seems a clear view of the world, yet in a way that only makes us more familiar with, more dependent on, TV.

BUT LET'S SET ASIDE all these distortions—the shrinkage, the implicit distancing, the illusory containment, the imperceptible cloud of ideology—and grant that TV does tend to present, as Goodman puts it, "less glory and more gore." Does this also mean that TV is "intrinsically anti-war"? There is no reason to think so; and this belief in television's salutary bias is not only unfounded, but intolerant, positing only one morally acceptable response. To assert, with Ellen Goodman, that on TV "the sides are not divided into good guys and bad guys, but aggressors and victims," is to say that the viewer, when he sits down to watch TV, is suddenly cleansed of all personal identity, all preconception, and can now apprehend the conflicts of the world from an exalted, unimpeachable standpoint, seeing reality through God's own eyes, or Ellen Goodman's. Far from conducing to a world of peace, such "objective" certainty is probably more dangerous than any archaic faith, because it reflects, and has at its disposal, the most enormous system of technology that has ever choked the world.

For not even the most sophisticated Sony has a perfect moral faculty built into it. We usually see what we want to see on television; and TV complicates this tendency by helping to determine that original desire. If it thinks that we want war, it sells us war. The medium can easily circumvent the pacific influence (if any) of its graphic images. Like radio or the yellow press, TV too can beat the drum. "Granted, television helped get us out of Vietnam," writes Michael Arlen, "but it also helped march us in."

And even if the medium weren't influential, the images per se dictate no automatic pacifism. Confronted with those pictures of the slaughtered Palestinians, a Phalangist viewer would surely smile at seeing all those dead "aggressors"; nor would the televised corpses of Israelis draw tears from any fervent anti-Zionist. And it isn't only foreigners who take

sides. Had there been television at Antietam on America's bloodiest day, this country might indeed still be two nations; but not necessarily, as George Will supposes, two nations frightened into peace, but two nations still at war, each side still watching every battle, and still finding, on the screen, excuses for refusing to negotiate.

And, had the Civil War been thus prolonged by television, the newsmen would, of course, continue to lament it, crying automatically for peace while shooting everything in sight. Truth is indeed the first casualty in any war, and our journalists have never been less honest than in this sentimental era. In his memoirs, published in 1946, Herbert Matthews wrote this sentence:

The urge to go out and fight, to pit one's strength and wits against the forces of nature, to seek adventure, risk life and take joy in comradeship and danger—these are deep feelings, so deep that even I who love life and family and luxury and books have yielded to them.

And, of course, that stirring list of hard inducements implies another, which Matthews took for granted: "the urge for a terrific story." No TV newsman would make such a frank avowal: Matthews's

"deep feelings" have become, not only difficult to gratify, but entirely taboo; and the old craving for a scoop now comes concealed in journalistic pieties about "the public's right to know." In a recent *TV Guide*, Dan Rather, asked what event he'd most like to report in the year 2000, came up with this: "Good evening, from CBS News. Peace and good will toward all living things prevails [sic] everywhere on earth and throughout the cosmos."

Now what would Dan Rather do, deprived of war and ill will in the cosmos? His utopian pronouncement, as frightening as it is disingenuous, does not reflect the sentiments of a living human being, but the contradictory longings of the medium that has consumed him. TV has us automatically deplore or ridicule all anger, fear, political commitment, deep belief, keen pleasure, exalted self-esteem, tremendous love; and yet, while making all these passions seem unnatural, the medium persistently dwells on their darkest consequences, teasing the housebound spectator with hints of that intensity that it has helped to kill. In fact, despite its pleas for universal calm, what TV depends upon is something else: brutal wars abroad, and an anxious peace in every living room.

REBEL AND STRANGER

Camus

by Patrick McCarthy

(Random House, 359 pp., \$17.85)

Albert Camus was not a lucky man. He was killed in a car driven by his own publisher, and since that fatal day in 1960, French literary opinion (as partisan as American passion about sports but even more fickle) has turned so completely against Camus's interests and values that the latest word from Paris fashions is that Camus is "embarrassing." Why "embarrassing" rather than old-fashioned in the "1930s style," as his latest biographer likes to call it? I think it is because Camus was always in the opposition; he grew up in the anti-Fascist era and, like other democratic and war-hating radicals, he never quite knew how to deal with a world increasingly dominated by a Communism that proves

harder to get rid of than Fascism.

Professor McCarthy is scornful of Camus's plaintive opposition to so many forms of domination and cruelty, contemptuous of Camus's fellow-conscience Ignazio Silone, and positively murderous about Arthur Koestler. He serenely informs us that "social change entails the conquest of power." As a biographer of Camus's unhappy and even tormented life, Professor McCarthy is excellent; as a critic, he is clever but he so relentlessly takes Camus's work apart that I wonder what induced him to write about Camus at all.

Camus is a natural set-up for destructive criticism. Nothing could be more out of date even in Mitterand's "Socialist"

"WE HAD IT ALL: Reaganomics, decaying cities, massive insensitivity to the needs of the poor, a long hot summer, and yet . . . not *one single riot*. No wonder Bill Moyers looks dispirited. How about a presidential commission to inquire into the causes of the non-riots?"

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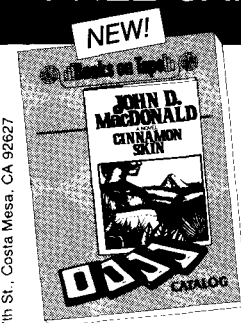
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France than Camus's writing about commitment rather than writing about writing, as the literary pollsters put it. And of course Camus was such a transparently arduous type, a creature of the manifest contradictions on which Professor McCarthy builds his book. He was a provincial Algerian of working-class stock who became a "mandarin" in literary Paris, an ex-Communist who never trusted Marxism, a personalist philosopher of absolute freedom who constantly attached himself to every human cause, a radical *pied-noir* ambivalently opposed to Algerian independence, an adroit writer of short fiction, *récits*, who really believed in the theater as his literary redemption, an unhappy moralist who was an indefatigable Don Juan, a God-seeker scornful of religion. His most famous and (I believe) still his best novel, *L'Étranger*, attains a hypnotizing tight-lipped eloquence in favor of "indifference." Its hero is the most *practicing* nihilist imaginable. At the end of the book, condemned by the court as much for his refusal to mourn his mother as for his murder of an Arab, Meursault becomes, as Camus wrote in his preface to a school edition of the French text, "the only Christ of which we are worthy."

THIS IS THE CAMUS whom I tenderly remember for his opposition to capital punishment, for his opposition to every form of totalitarianism and every pretense behind it, for his premonitions, even at its height, that the Resistance spirit could not last. This was when his articles braced many of the French who were sickened by their collaborationist countrymen. But of course Camus could not live up to his own writings. Professor McCarthy brings out well the bare, hard facts of Camus's life and the many reasons stemming from his bitter background why, in his struggles with fashionable literary opinion, Camus increasingly felt himself to be a failure.

French writers are the harshest adversaries, intellectually, of the bourgeoisie because they generally come from that class and for all practical purposes remain in it. The enduring stamp of the working class on Camus's character and sympathies was not lost on Malraux, the adventurer and politician, or on Sartre, the would-be revolutionary. Sartre did his best to disown his class by assuming a homeless style of life, indifference to money, rejection of the Nobel Prize. He even did his best to get arrested distributing violent super-radical literature. But as

President DeGaulle said, it was no use arresting an eminent writer in France. Arresting François Villon, he pointed out, had done no good.

Camus, from the Algerian French working class, was a typical scholarship boy easily pushed along by the French educational system but prevented by his lifelong tuberculosis (caught at seventeen) from the usual academic career. He never knew his father, killed at the Marne when Camus was one year old. His illiterate Spanish mother, who was not just the moral center of his life but in many respects his double, was a strange, obsessively silent woman, probably slightly deranged, whose "life of toil" left Camus with a lasting sympathy for working people but also with her sense of denial. The best thing in Professor McCarthy's book is his observation that Camus tried to incorporate her silence into his books. She could not read his books and did not rejoice in his fame; even before the Nobel, she felt he had gone far enough. Long before I knew anything about Camus's always "silent" mother, I somehow knew from *The Stranger* that the dead mother in the book was a clue to the psychic currents running through Camus's own life. The irony of Meursault's being condemned as much for unfilial feeling as for murdering an Arab pointed to some unresolved bitterness in the author himself.

The emphasis of this biography is very rightly on Camus's Algeria—his early hardships, his love of swimming and soccer, his lyrical rapture about the "Greek" world of the Mediterranean littoral, the mingled, always tense lower-class Algeria of dockers, butchers, cafes, *pied-noirs*, Spaniards, Arabs, Jews. There was a daily romance with the everlasting sunlight and the sea, then the sudden strange silence of the Algerian evening—a recurring note in Camus's work. Camus learned his boxer's stance very early, from the constant sense of menace in this hopelessly divided, multiracial society. Invested with his mother's peculiar silences and enigmatic stoicism, Algeria was somehow "empty" as well as endlessly stimulating. It was a troubled colony, envious of France but also pretentiously defiant of it; poor, tough, writhing between Arab nationalism and standpat *pied-noir* conservatism and racism.

Camus went from job to job; he was briefly a member of the Algerian Communist Party, and found himself professionally only as a newspaperman. He was never free of tuberculosis; the perky

young woman he married at twenty-one turned out to be a morphine addict. The tenuous alliance between French and Arab workers in the Communist Party could hold no better than his marriage. Amazingly, this distracted and impoverished young man already had in outline *The Stranger* and *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Yet he was racked by the different impulses that led to his lyrical essays and the stoical tone of *The Stranger* and *Sisyphus*. He would never give up his belief that salvation for him as artist and man lay in the public "masks" available in the theater.

ON HIS FIRST appearance in Paris, Camus was derided by the literary crowd for his too-bright Algerian suit and red tie. How did this provincial newspaperman, this eager soccer goalie and sensualist, get to be the ominously strict stylist and classical philosopher behind *The Myth of Sisyphus*? The extraordinary voice behind the "stranger" grumpily rejecting all the established values in scornful little sentences loaded with gunshot? Of course, he had trained and dedicated himself in secret to be equal to the French veneration of word, style, correctness, pronouncement. Just as the real life of the "stranger" is one that he lives apart from his girl friends, in the profoundest alienation from the exterior life he actually enjoys, so Camus, a lonely man more eager for company than writers usually are, managed to keep his writing life to himself, to shape and sharpen himself as a writer without ever professing the "intoxication" that Sartre claimed for the act of writing.

But the real key to Camus's development is in a sentence from *The Rebel*, a book Professor McCarthy disparages, no doubt because Camus is so tremulously for rebellion and fearful of revolution. (Professor McCarthy is not fearful of revolution.) Camus speaks in *The Rebel* of man's paramount need to oppose himself not just to the moral order but to the terms of existence imposed on us by the gods. His hero, like that of the young Karl Marx, is Prometheus. Prometheus, like Marx, lost his actual fight and became just a name. I admit it: Camus, too, felt like a loser. As he said somewhat mournfully in his Nobel speech, his generation was born during World War I, came of age just as Hitler came to power and Stalin was destroying what was left of the Russian Revolution. Camus's brothers in history then "had to complete their education" by facing up to the war

in Spain, World War II, the concentration camps, the Europe of torture and prisons, and they now had to bring their children and their works to maturity in a world threatened with nuclear destruction. "No one, I suppose, can expect them to be optimistic. . . . They had to fashion for themselves an art of living in times of catastrophe in order to be reborn before fighting openly against the death-instinct at work in our history."

There was the overwhelming sense of a fight against hopeless odds that went into Camus's thinking at the outset of Hitler's war. Yet out of the war and the many myths of the resistance came Camus's magnificent war journalism in *Combat*, his versions of moral solidarity that went into an allegory of the occupation like *The Plague*, his horror of capital punishment, and his extraordinary insistence in the face of so much derision that the task of modern man was to be "a saint without God." No one during the "existentialist" vogue felt as deeply as Camus did the anguish of a moribund Christianity. For him "the death of God" was not a phrase but a kind of self-reproach. Certainly he felt himself responsible.

Which did not keep his "dubiously angelic" nature, as Professor McCarthy calls it, from the usual urban lechery (though his abiding sense of being a dying man helps to explain it). His fear of being cut off from his roots also explains his atavism about Algeria, his opposition to independence when the Algerian revolution came to a head and the most reactionary elements in France went on a rampage and even tried to kill DeGaulle. Camus again sided with the losers, and of course intellectual, sophisticated, left-wing France has never forgiven him.

HISTORY is merciless in its progression. Camus, like so many of the 1930s generation, knew politics only as opposition. He lacked Sartre's armchair advocacy of revolutionary violence in the name of a mythical working class or vanguard of history; he came from the working class. He lacked faith in what Professor McCarthy smugly calls "the conquest of power," and it is to be admitted that like many young men who grew up in poverty during the Fascist-Stalinist 1930s, Camus thought of power as domination, not law. He was biased by the colonial system of which he was more a victim than he knew. But at least Camus lacked the bourgeois intellectual's ability, now so marked in academic France,

to own a Marxist philosophy as one owns a weekend home in the country.

When Professor McCarthy gets through with Camus, he does not leave very much. The critical performance is all, and the reader may very well be left more with an impression of Professor McCarthy's brilliance than of Camus's possibly lasting importance. I prefer to remember Camus as the "rebel" whose basis of opposition was the longing for perfect freedom—of the kind one attains only in books. On the night before his execution, Meursault, the "stranger" to all our ways, thinks back to the mother who has been his enemy (and double) all along:

With death so near, Mother must have felt like someone on the brink of freedom, ready to start life all over again. No one, no

one in the world, had any right to weep for her. And I, too, felt ready to start life all over again. It was as if that great rush of anger [at the priest] had washed me clean, emptied me of hope, and, gazing up at the dark sky spangled with its signs and stars, for the first time, the first, I laid my heart open to the benign indifference of the universe. To feel it so like myself, indeed, so brotherly, made me realize that I'd been happy, and that I was happy still.

ALFRED KAZIN

Alfred Kazin is completing *An American Procession*, a book on writers from Emerson to Eliot. His *The Inmost Leaf* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) and *Starting Out In the Thirties* (Vintage) are now available in paperback.

AMERICA'S GREATEST PAINTER

Thomas Eakins
by Lloyd Goodrich

(Harvard University Press, 2 volumes, 693 pp., \$70 until 12/31/82, \$90 thereafter)

Lloyd Goodrich's new book, *Thomas Eakins*, is an instant classic, a combined biography and critical history of America's greatest painter. Mr. Goodrich goes only so far as to call Eakins America's greatest realist, but there are no romantics, even among the Hudson River landscapists, who quite reach the level in their field that Eakins does in his. As for any recent twentieth-century competitors, Eakins, like every respectable painter from Apelles to Picasso, took for granted that elements of abstraction are fundamental to the organization of a painting (look at some of his geometrical perspective studies) but that these values, while foundational, are only half of what has always constituted the whole of great art.

He was a painter of wide range within what would seem the limitation of a unyielding veracity to the visual world. In explicitly detailed paintings of people out of doors—fishing, rowing, sailing—he makes us breathe fresh air and feel breeze and sunlight without recourse to innovations the Impressionists invented to do the same thing. Indoors, he ranges from the raw light and stuffy atmosphere

of arenas impregnated with the athletic sweat of his boxers and wrestlers and twice-breathed air of spectators, to small, shadowed rooms where friends playing music together are transported beyond time and place. These are wonderful pictures, but it is in his portraits that Eakins triumphantly stands as an equal in the most select company of old and modern masters.

Mr. Goodrich's new book supersedes his own earlier one and gives the coup de grace to any recent contenders for the title of definitive work. In his original research back in the early 1930s, he collected factual material and personal reminiscences from Eakins's widow and numbers of his colleagues, sitters, and students during the last moments when these vital sources were available. He made verbatim copies of Eakins's notebooks then in the possession of the widow, but now lost.

Subsequent research by Mr. Goodrich and other scholars of American art leaves no discernible gaps in the chronological factual record of Eakins's life, and Mr. Goodrich covers the ground with accompanying examination of Eakins's art

in a beautifully organized, consistently interesting, and unromanticized narration. Pending the unlikely event of important new material turning up, further Eakins studies will have to be rewrites of this book with minor embellishments. Add to this the superb production given the two volumes by the Harvard University Press for the National Gallery of Art, which commissioned the book as one of the Ailsa Mellon Bruce Studies in American Art, and you have an event that everyone connected with can be proud of. Finally, with the Eakins exhibition that opened at the Philadelphia Museum of Art last May and closes at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston on November 28, this looks like the year in which Eakins's stature, at last, is recognized at the highest competitive level with his European counterparts.

Because the book is a first-rate biography, *Thomas Eakins* has passages that are as valuable in their evocation of time and place as they are in the record of one person's life and work. In 1866, when he was twenty-two, Eakins went to Paris to study at the *École des Beaux-Arts* under Jean-Léon Gérôme, an arch academician. The scandal of Manet's "*Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe*" was still fresh after three years, shadowed only by the even more vicious furor over his "*Olympia*," which had erupted the year before Eakins's arrival. The innovational young painters who would later be called the Impressionists (Renoir was three years older than Eakins; Monet, four) were feeling the first stings of persecution by the establishment. Yet Eakins's letters home during his three European years, with recurrent study in Paris, give no hint of awareness that a rebellion was going on. They present instead a picture of a talented, honest, ambitious, perceptive student who neither questioned the

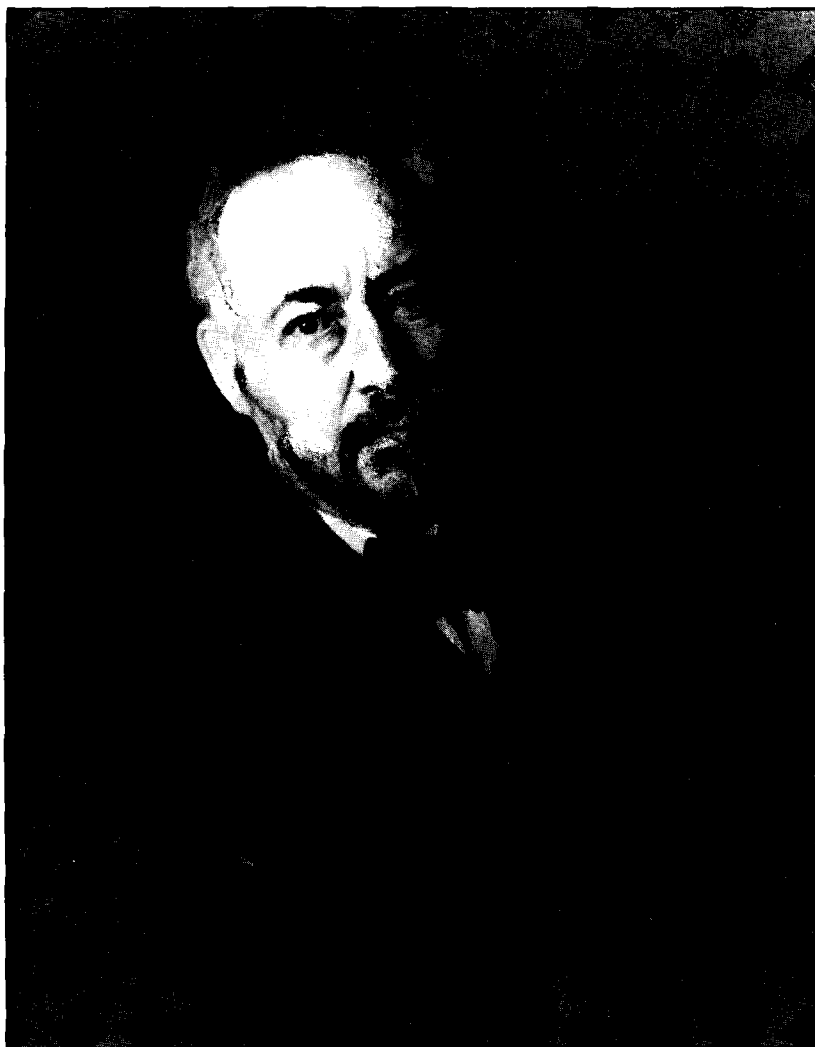
Academy's authority and the excellence of Gérôme's instruction nor knew that anyone else did. The Gérôme Eakins described in his letters, and continued to revere all his life, is far from the standard picture of the crusty, hidebound old codger who years later, facing the triumph of Impressionism, still unreconciled, described as "filth" the Caillebotte collection of Impressionist painting when it was offered to the Louvre.

of the Whitney Museum of American Art, comes as close as he ever has to permitting himself a manifesto of his doctrine as a historian. Citing Winslow Homer and Albert Ryder along with Eakins, "The most enduring American art," Mr. Goodrich writes, "has not always been in accord with the changing currents of its time; more often it has come from the deeper springs of individual and national character."

The early struggles of the Impressionists and the overplayed martyrdom of Vincent van Gogh have popularized the idea that all great nineteenth-century artists were involuntary saints neglected or persecuted by fiendish pygmies like Gérôme, a stereotype that writers on Eakins have seized upon. Eakins had his troubles, is it true, beginning with the rejection of his most ambitious work, the acutely realistic operating room scene called the "*Gross Clinic*," from the art exhibition of the Philadelphia Centennial and the humiliating compromise, after a great ruckus, of its inclusion among the Centennial's medical exhibits. The incident is inevitably paired with the rejection of the young Impressionists by the official Paris salons.

But in many ways, Eakins courted his subsequent miseries

and frustrations. The Impressionists were banded together in defense and companionship in a city where some deviation from the social norm was not only tolerated but expected in the tradition of artistic bohemianism. But Eakins, alone in Philadelphia, stubbornly persisted in violating that city's conservative social code until he alienated even the most patient of his influential sponsors. The professional troubles besetting him culminated in his dismissal from his position as director of the Pennsylvania Academy's art



THOMAS EAKINS, SELF PORTRAIT, COURTESY OF NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN

Eakins remained curiously impervious to—seemed even to remain unaware of—Modernism all his life. Before he died in 1916, American art, after a time lag, had begun to catch up with every European movement from Impressionism to Cubism, but Eakins remained, in Mr. Goodrich's words, "a nonacademic traditionalist" who was "never an innovator in artistic language." The close identification with his subject that makes him the perfect author for an Eakins biography is apparent in his last sentence, where Mr. Goodrich, the former director

school in 1886, when he was forty-two.

With his determinedly dispassionate approach, Mr. Goodrich recounts the known circumstances of this central disaster in Eakins's life and career insofar as they are documented, leaving open to readers whatever speculations they may want to make as to the justice or injustice of the affair. A specific objection to Eakins's teaching was his refusal to add a cache-sexe to nude male models in the women's drawing and painting classes. Today when totally nude male and female models are posed together in mixed classes, Eakins may seem a courageous pioneer in a fight against prudery, but it has always seemed to me that his objection to a pouch and a bit of string around the waist as intolerable interruptions to the study of body structure was extreme at the price of a job he needed and the sacrifice of the pleasure he took in teaching, which afforded this increasingly isolated man some of his most satisfying human contacts.

THERE was a great buzz of scandalous gossip about Eakins's "immorality" at the time, although there is no hint of evidence that he was, or ever had been, engaged in any kind of extramarital sex. By the evidence of photographs taken during the two years before his dismissal, however, he might have seemed to be becoming a little too fond of taking photographs of groups of students stripped down in the countryside, ostensibly adjunctive to paintings of Arcadian subjects, but not of a quality, it seems to me, to have been of much help in the studio. Eakins also enjoyed being photographed naked outdoors himself. Mr. Goodrich describes (but mercifully omits) well-known photographs of the once exuberant, well-built young artist who, in late middle age, overweight and scruffy looking, continued to exhibit his body to the camera.

It would be easy, in truth, to construct a biography of Eakins as a repellent personality in middle and old age, beginning with assumptions of voyeurism and exhibitionism (which are not the same thing as Arcadian pleasure in feeling air and sun on your body, a pleasure rapturously described by Eakins's friend Walt Whitman), and drawing on verified accounts of his slovenliness, his intellectual lethargy and lack of curiosity in concerns not immediately connected with his painting and teaching; then there were also his offensive suggestions to ladies sitting for commissioned portraits (usu-

ally the ones least likely to accommodate him) that they take their clothes off next time, his pleasure in being photographed carrying nude models around the studio, and in showing the photographs to members of the Philadelphia gentry who were most likely to be shocked. All of this (barring psychopathological assumptions) Mr. Goodrich neither hides nor defends, except to express his own conviction that Eakins's late and childless marriage (at the age of forty) was not held together by his wife's patience and the sacrifice of her career to his, as is widely contended, but by deep mutual devotion. But Mr. Goodrich gained this impression from interviews with Mrs. Eakins more than fifteen years after her husband's death, when the blind idealization common to artists' widows had had time to set in.

Eakins died a few weeks before his seventy-second birthday and thirty years after his dismissal from the Pennsylvania Academy. However gross some aspects of his personality had become (and I have overstressed them because they are usually underplayed), they were no more contradictory than the dissonance between the personality and the art of any number of other great artists, including the greatest of Eakins's contemporaries, Cézanne, the plodding, fearful, awkward, socially incompetent man whose "feebleness in life," as he called it, seems irreconcilable with his genius. With the tardy recognition of Eakins now at its climax, we are probably soon due for a postmortem psychiatric analysis of the greatest American painter in an effort to explain how the subtlety, the penetration, and (no other word will do) the compassion of his finest portraits under the guise of unsparing realism, could co-exist with the transformation of a vibrant young man into something like a boor, even a concupiscent boor.

When the psychiatrist sets to work, he should prop up facing him at one side of his typewriter Eakins's tragic self-portrait of 1902 (he was fifty-eight) or the even more heart-rending profile portrait by an unknown photographer of about the same date now in the Seymour Adelman collection, and on the other side Lloyd Goodrich's book as a ready reference and watchful disciplinarian in the probing of this tormented spirit.

JOHN CANADAY

John Canaday is former art critic for *The New York Times*.

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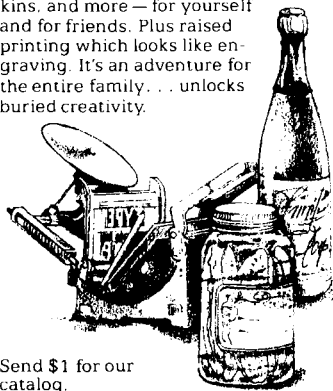
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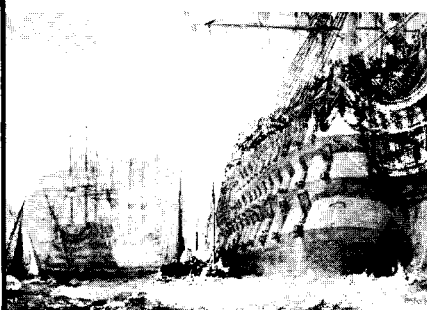
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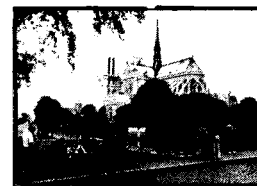
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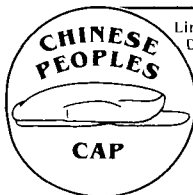
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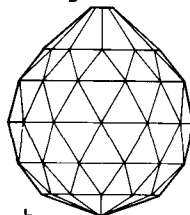


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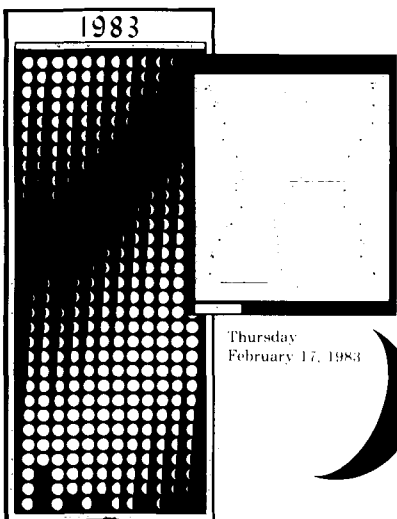
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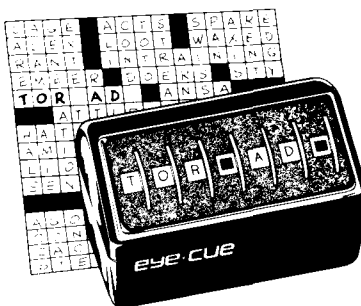
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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Downcast Eyes

THE VIETNAM MEMORIAL, like the war, has stirred up a good deal of passion. So much, in fact, that when it is dedicated during the Veterans Day ceremonies it will still be incomplete. It will be missing two elements not in the original design, but added on afterward at the insistence of Vietnam vets: a flag and a realistic sculpture of three American soldiers by Frederick Hart. These additions miffed the art community and twenty-two-year-old Maya Lin of Yale, creator of the original design—two long walls of black granite meeting at an oblique angle and inscribed with the names of the 57,939 Americans lost in Vietnam. Ms. Lin protested that a flagpole would make her memorial look “like a golf green,” and she accused Hart of “drawing mustaches on other people’s portraits.” The Commission of Fine Arts, headed by J. Carter Brown of the National Gallery, negotiated a compromise designed to bring peace with honor. It permits a flag and statue but places them out of sight of the walls, the names, the men. (Hart’s sculpture apparently emerged intact. In July *The Washington Post* reported that the three soldiers, all dressed in battle gear, were “originally to carry rifles; these may be scrapped as too provocative.” Thus far the soldiers have not been disarmed.)

SINCE I HAD been an early critic of Lin’s design and wrote that I thought it more conducive to recalling the victims of some vast and terrible accident than the memory of fallen soldiers (“Memorials,” *TNR*, May 23, 1981), I felt obliged to go down to the Mall to see it in the flesh. I went on a warm October day two weeks before the official opening. Except for a few final touches being applied by workmen to the landscape, the monument was just as Lin intended it. I approached it from the Lincoln Memorial, only a few hundred yards away. Perhaps it was the contrast that made for the shock. The Vietnam memorial filled me with an overwhelming feeling of desolation. I had come prepared for the funereal black; I had come prepared for the fifty-seven thousand names, that inconceivable ocean of suffering. I had not come prepared to find myself, with them, below the earth. As one approaches the walls of the memorial, one descends

about ten feet; the walls are sunk into the ground so that only their tops reach the surrounding grass. I had the feeling of being before a vast, open grave containing not bodies but names. We had now buried these soldiers twice: first their bodies in numberless scattered graves; now again their memory behind these walls. Not far from where I grew up is a pauper’s cemetery where even the god-forsaken are given something—a stone, a cross, or even just a flower—that rises from the earth not only to mark the site but to symbolize the continuing presence of the dead in the world of the living. Not a stick rises from this vast tomb. The visual effect is startling. From behind, the memorial is invisible. One sees only a grassy field, followed by some unexplained depression, perhaps a hidden quagmire, followed by gently upward-sloping grass on the other side.

MAYA LIN EXPLAINS that she resisted the idea of a flag because she thought the memorial should avoid political statements. Her aversion to the political was such that the memorial, even as it stands now, flagless, is not quite the same as she intended. Originally her walls were to have nothing but names. “I wanted to provide a place to make people realize what happened,” she said, “not to push it over, not to make it pretty, not to terrorize either—a place to be aware of death, what it is.” Directors of the memorial, perhaps sensing something political beneath this apolitical statement, and perhaps believing that war is death but also more than death, decided that a modest explanation be added before the first of the fifty-seven thousand names. It reads: “In honor of the men and women of the armed forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam War. The names of those who gave their lives and those who remain missing are inscribed in the order that they were taken from us.” They also added an acknowledgment after the last name: “Our nation honors the courage, sacrifice and devotion to duty and country of its Vietnam veterans. This memorial was built with private contributions from the American people. November 11, 1982.” Step back just a few yards and these precious words disappear, and we are left, as Ms. Lin intended, with only death.

I LEFT the Vietnam memorial, but the feeling of waste and emptiness would not leave me. How *does* one honor those who die in an uncertain cause, I wondered. Looking as much for consolation as for answers, I decided to drive across the Potomac to Arlington National Cemetery. I had never been there, but I had heard that it contained a monument to the Confederacy, surely the most uncertain of all American causes. A guide directed me to Section 16. There several hundred Confederate soldiers lie buried in concentric circles. In the center rises a great bronze and granite structure, at the top of which is a figure of a woman, her face turned toward the South. In her right hand is a plowshare and a pruning hook. In her left, outstretched over her fallen sons, a laurel wreath. At her feet is inscribed: “They shall beat their swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks.” Below, a frieze of figures rings the monument: fathers sending sons off to war, wives parting from husbands, and other scenes of domestic suffering and devotion. On the base is written:

Not for fame or reward
Not for place or rank
Not lured by ambition
Or goaded by necessity
But in simple
Obedience to duty
As they understood it
These men suffered all
Sacrificed all
Dared all—and died.

They died, to be plain about it, fighting to divide the Union and perpetuate slavery. Yet the Union found a way to remember them with eyes upturned.

THE CONFEDERATE monument was built by Sir Moses Ezekiel, who had fought for the South in his youth. It was erected in 1914, half a century after the last soldier and innocent had died. Maya Lin says she has no memory of the Vietnam War. She protested furiously that the additions to her design will distort her original vision. I think she is right. I hope she is right. Otherwise, we might have to wait another forty years before the dead of Vietnam lie as peacefully as the Confederates of Section 16.

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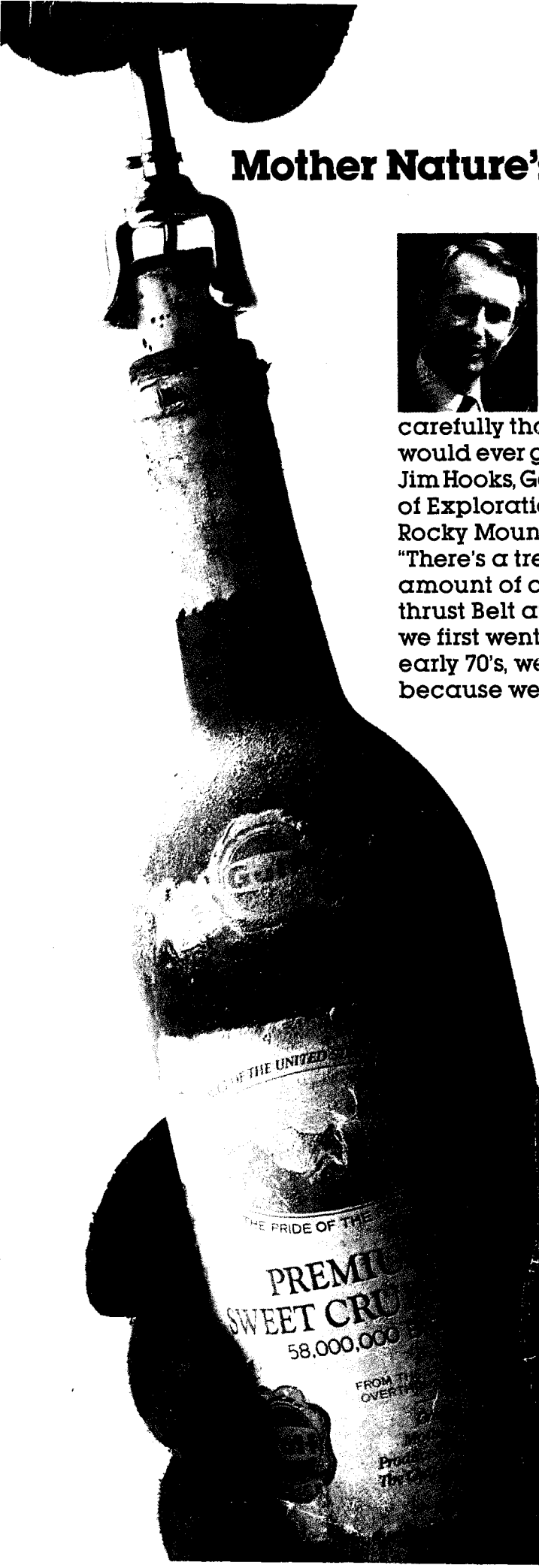
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